This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com

Digitized by Google

1.25

"And all the sweet serenity of books"
One of the Seelman Jr. Collection.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES

& OTHER STORIES FROM THE FRONT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

«But just the same, I can see,» he suddenly breaks out.

(See p. 238)

Digitized by Google

FRØIS FRØISLAND

THE MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES

& OTHER STORIES FROM THE FRONT

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY
NILS FLATEN

30-8616

NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS
·PUBLISHERS·
1930

Digitized by Google

*

THE MAN WITH
THE X-RAY EYES
COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY HARPER & BROTHERS
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

FIRST EDITION

B-E

*

Digitized by Google

«Gloire à la France éternelle,
Gloire à ceux qui sont morts pour elle!»

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO THOSE MEN

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

Part I: The Front

I. On the Firing-line 3
II. The Somme 14
III. The Front-line Trenches 24
IV. In the Argonne Forest 32

Part II: Stories from the Front

V. Sall Uhu—The Lion of Senegal 45
VI. The Eagle's Nest 74
VII. The Chameleon 101
VIII. Christmas Eve in the Trenches 131
IX. The Violin 149
X. The Coward from the Vosges Mountains 172
XI. I Stood Looking at My Own Corpse 200
XII. The Man with the X-ray Eyes 231

Part III: Through the Triumphal Arch

XIII. Through the Triumphal Arch 261

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ILLUSTRATIONS

"But Just the Same, I Can See," He Suddenly Breaks Out *frontispiece*

facing page

Suddenly I Felt a Hand on My Shoulder—Indeed I Felt It 50

He Was Looking Intently Toward the Austrian Position, a Rifle Beside Him in the Loophole 88

"He Has Dropped It, the Swine," Said One of Them. "Hand Over the Light" 118

"Rapid Firing Over the Whole Line!" He Digs into the Cartridge-box and Wants to Reload 146

"Long Live Music, Long Live I Myself!" She Screamed Again and Again 166

"Keep Your Quartermaster, Geraldine! Keep Him, Just Keep Him, I Tell You!" 196

"For God's Sake, Sir, Do Not Raise an Alarm!" He Groaned 218

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PART I

THE FRONT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

On the Firing-line

THEY talk about the front, oh yes, the front ——

We rise out of the ground and find ourselves in an open space in the forest; it happens to be an outfarm, a century-old grazing-ground for cattle and horses right in the middle of the thicket. Here is where the German companies, disrupted, deathly tired, came pouring back one raw, cold day in September, on their flight from the Marne, driven like animals through the forest. Now and then the stragglers halt for a mere second behind a tree or a stump to catch their breaths, while at random they pour the contents of a machine-gun into the woods back of them. For there are the *Franzosen*, yelling and firing, brandishing their long bayonets—but they, too, equally worn, after weeks of constant pursuit. Next, another piece of open ground, the Germans edging around it, running, reeling, making a final spurt, breath and strength all spent, dropping behind the trees at the edge of the woods. «Here! Let's stop

Digitized by Google

here. We can't go any farther!»—And the French on their side: «They have stopped, the devils! Halt! Position! Fire!» They stagger and fall as if drunk. The captain is gone, half the company is gone.

For more than two hours they bang away at one another, with no one venturing out on the plain. Legs and arms are heavy as lead, and rest only adds to their weight. But at the border of the woods they become easy targets; the distance across the plain is only three hundred meters. Three Germans crawl forward on their stomachs and burrow with their spoons of camp shovels, making a little groove in the earth; they lie with their heads pushed down in the dirt as they dig and dig blindly, while with their hands they pack the loosened soil into a sort of cover for their heads and shoulders. One of them is shot, and the two others crawl forward in his place. Thus they continue.

That is how the trenches were started—the one in which we stand, and probably most of the first-line trenches along the entire front.

During one year's warfare, from this little spoonful of a hole in the ground there has developed a fortress, from a shovel's breadth to miles and miles on either side—the most terrible that the world has ever seen. A wall of concrete and iron from Nieuport by the sea to the frontier of Switzerland. What is the

Digitized by Google

Chinese wall compared with this barrier! And the catacombs of Rome are like a cottager's cellar compared with this labyrinth of underground passages leading to and from the foremost line of the front. And the first mutilated, worn-out companies have become hundreds of regiments, two armies, lying on the watch for each other in holes in the ground.

I stand looking through the loophole in the French trench, observing the German line along the woods right before us. Here—why should the armies just here stiffen into earth and cement, opposite each other? How incomprehensible and ridiculous it all is! We are in a bewitched forest. Germany and France are facing each other in these two gray streaks on a bit of pasture ground in the midst of the forest. Round about stand the trees, silent and gloomy; the early twilight of a day in December is already descending through the tops. Have I not experienced this before? I seem to be on a peaceful châlet at home in Norway again, walking along with my gun in the twilight of an evening in late autumn. There is the meadow, gray, dead, and frozen, and isn't that a hare humping along on the other side of the fence? Something is moving. Bang! a French Lebel rifle blazes away right at my ear. «*Voilà le cochon!*» and the hare disappeared at once.

We walk eight hundred to nine hundred meters

Digitized by Google

through the first French shelter trench. It is comparatively quiet this afternoon; we find perhaps not more than fifty men in all—the *guetteurs*—men on the outposts, who have to be at their station to observe and give the alarm if those over yonder should start something. A shot pops now and then, just as on a country rifle range at home on a Sunday afternoon, when the boys are testing the guns. We hear a thud in the ground above us, and some earth and a couple of pebbles roll into the ditch at our feet. A sharp blow resounds like an echo behind us, and I recognize the sound from the elk hunts in the big forest at home—a projectile has struck the trunk of a tree. «Look here,» says the captain, and he points through a loophole. «Watch the branches over there on the plain. Now I press the button ——» and between the branches there spring up small, red, luminous points. Electric sights for firing in the darkness. If the alarm is raised at night, the men are to aim just over the sparks and the projectile will have a fair chance of hitting the German trench.

Yes, this is the front. Beyond the branches, between them and the German trench, the men have not ventured to go for fifteen months, except occasionally on pitch-dark nights, when they would sneak forward like Indians lying in ambush.

Digitized by Google

The captain points to two bluish-gray bundles halfway between the French and the German lines.

«Yes,» he says, «now they don't stink any more, but for a long time they were a constant source of annoyance and abomination. Now they have been dried by the sun and wind until there is nothing left but the clothes and skeletons. Every morning, for weeks, as soon as it became light enough to shoot, we had to chase the crows away from those bundles with rifle-shots. They met one night as they were crawling forward. We did not hear any shots, so I presume they went at each other with their knives.

«But it is not quite correct to say that the Germans and French are not closer to one another than these three hundred meters, even at this point. I myself have been nearer the German line than where we stand now. For in two or three places between them and us, and deep down—eight or nine meters—there are men squeezed into narrow rat-holes, boring and pushing themselves forward by means of electric steel rods. Mines are prepared. They go straight against one another, the German and French miners; and he is doomed who last hears the sound and last gets his mine lighted. In about five days we hope to light the fuse in ours.»

They talk about the front——

But everything that we have seen for many days

Digitized by Google

is nothing but the front, in depth and width. The villages from which the women were expelled, and soldiers, soldiers, and more soldiers, filled every house and every path. Soldiers and horses; mules, automobiles, and more soldiers. The endless procession of thousands upon thousands of automobiles rolling along the highway from Châlons, and every automobile filled to capacity with clay-besmeared soldiers. «*Au front!*» they shouted to us in chorus, and merrily waved their caps and guns.

It is the front that we have seen in the gigantic hangars scattered here and there over the fields and in openings in the forest. They are always so located that they afford a wide and dominating view over a large territory; every time I saw them I was reminded of an eagle's nest on an inaccessible, rocky precipice, though the ground here was comparatively even. But, like eagles' nests, they were almost impossible to see. «Where?» we would again and again ask our chauffeur, when he pointed and said: «*Voilà un camp d'aviation!*» The hangars were completely covered with painted canvas, mottled with large brown-gray-green spots which melt into the surrounding landscape. A *Taube* might sail a few hundred yards directly above and not be able to distinguish them from the field.—We are at the front as we travel through the ancient, beautiful park, where hun-

Digitized by Google

dreds of ambulance wagons are lined up in front of the famous château where the marble halls now serve as hospital wards.—And it was at the front yesterday at twilight when we came past a barn, the largest I have ever seen, where, inside, gleamed a queer, bright light. We stopped and went in. There was a motion-picture show in the barn. A *poilu* was busy experimenting with the machine set up on a tottering scaffold of planks. Between him and the opposite wall, on which the pictures were to be thrown, sat five hundred soldiers, squatting or cross-legged on the bare wooden floor. The operator and his audience kept up a lively conversation, and we were informed that as soon as the lens was dry the adventures of «the *poilu* on furlough» would be run off the reel for us. A shower of witticisms fell upon the movie director and his assistants, and tobacco smoke floated like clouds through the barn.

But the front is perhaps, first and foremost, all that wonderful machinery which reaches for miles to the rear and whose task it is to furnish food and drink to the war's millions of men and beasts. From the ration-carriers in the foremost rifle-pits, who edge their way through the mud puddles, while the shower of shrapnel pounds dents in the tin pails, to the camp bakery, where 200 men work in day and night shifts,

Digitized by Google

or to the deer park at Château X——, where 1,200 steers and 800 hogs are being fattened for slaughter. We have met all phases on our way out: the storehouses, the transfer stations, transportation columns, caravans without end; camp kitchens, pyramids of wine casks, mountains of food and drink!

We have seen lumberjacks by the thousands—for a couple of miles through thick forest, wood-cutters in uniform at every other tree. Huts and barracks to be built, mine galleries to be lined and propped up, rifle-pits to be braced, roads to be filled and mended. Everything for the front. The roads—of course, during the period of mud entire regiments are engaged in road work; the mud is scraped away, crushed rock is hauled in, hundreds of steam rollers groan as they laboriously wabble back and forth. In many places the roads are so damaged by the transport column and the incessant wear and tear of riding and driving, that the old road is simply abandoned and a new one is built across fields and meadows. And see how the farms are littered up and misused! The beautiful meadow lots in many places look like hog-pens. Then there are the camp railways, which every day seem to be pushed forward a mile or two—toward the front. We met a town mayor, who smilingly told us that the little community had vainly begged the state au-

Digitized by Google

thorities for eight long years for aid in the construction of the little stump of a railroad so sorely needed in the district. It was useless—their petition fell on deaf ears. Then came the war. General X —— with his two army corps took up a position on the community's territory, and in twelve days the railway was completed. It is true that 35,000 men had worked at it ceaselessly day and night. Such is the front.

Most vividly of all, perhaps, do my comrades and I remember the cannon-ball which we saw today passing through the air toward the German trenches. Yes, we did see it. We were standing by one of the French batteries, which bombarded—and was itself bombarded by—the German batteries near Hill 153. The distance between the German and French cannon was 3,400 meters, but only 1,290 meters from the cannon where we stood over to the nearest German rifle-pit. The battery chief stands listening and notes the impact of every shot. He is firing with 120-millimeter guns —*cent-vingt court*; every projectile weighs twenty kilograms. Suddenly he exclaims: «*Regardez, messieurs!*—Look, gentlemen!»——One can see the shell —and at the same time he lets his arm drop. The shot is fired, and we see the shell like a black ball moving in a perfect arch through the air; it disappears in the distance like a smoking meteor. «It struck,» said he, taking his hand from his ear.

Digitized by Google

Or perhaps it is the *Taubes*, which were shot at, straight above us, that we shall remember the longest. Fog banks constantly bursting through the air beneath the giant snow-plow up above—but never quite reaching it: the exploding shells from the French guns. Or would it be the bomb-proof cellars at St.-Menehould and Verdun? Or the *poilu* theater in the cave of the Gruri forest? Or our own automobile, when it was spattered by shrapnel from the shell exploding in the ditch six meters in front of us?

No—there is *one* recollection from the front: a slope which from a distance looked as if it had been covered by a white sheet. And when we came closer, it turned out to be a cemetery. The white that we saw was the newly made wooden crosses over fresh graves. There were about five or six thousand of them already, but no hedge or fence on any side, so that new sections might be added any time. The cemetery extended to the woods above, and into the endless fields surrounding it. Now everything was wet and sticky. But it lay on the sunny side.

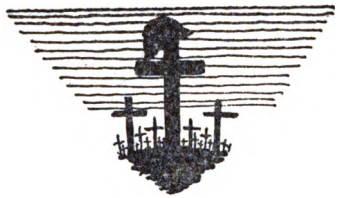
Such is the front.

But it is also something quite different from this and infinitely more than this. For it is the greatest and most intense of all things—life and death in close embrace.

Digitized by Google

And it has ten thousand things than which nothing more beautiful can be seen anywhere—nothing more peaceful, nothing more unselfish and self-sacrificing.

But it is the most awful thing in the world.



Digitized by Google

The Somme

HERE the Tricolor flutters amid the ruins.

We have crawled into an opening between two huge rocks, and from this «shelf» we have a view of the whole village, or what is left of it. We are almost in the center of the heap of ruins; the remnants of the houses stand smoking; pungent, sour-smelling fumes rise from the fire area; now and then a beam, burned through, drops into the glowing coals, sparks fly from the pool of lava, the top of which is now about to harden into a gray crust. We see soldiers emerging here and there between the gable-walls or vanishing down the cellar openings—one does not stay above-ground uncovered longer than is absolutely necessary. Round about us shrapnel is falling. Again and again the bombs come, but fortunately they always pass at approximately the same point above our heads. This, at least, is the advantage of the precise range firing of the Germans. It is just as if there were invisible

Digitized by Google

fly-wheels up in the air, droning incessantly. Fly-wheels of all calibers, from the enormous, massive ones of a ton's weight down to the tiny rapid-whirling spools. And every minute, several times a minute, a puff rises from the ground, as if a huge sack of flour were dropped from the height of a hundred yards and burst just as it reached the earth. But this flour is black and lumpy; we make out roots and stumps, planks and pieces of rock, whirling in the air, mixed with the loose earth. Now and then the stumps that we can distinguish within the spray are nothing other than human bodies torn into shreds.

Over the ground flutters the Tricolor. It has come back. Some of the soldiers in the lead of the offensive have brought it along, folded up in their knapsacks, and before the ground is cleared the French colors are raised again. On a garden wall riddled with bullets, close by us, one little pennant, the size of a kit-bag, has been fastened hurriedly by means of four wooden pegs. Along the former main street, *la grande rue*, there is one house, which barely can be called standing, but from its charred ridge-piece waves a Tricolor. With its new and bright colors it makes a striking contrast with the ashheaps and the burned and gray surfaces round about. It is mostly the red—scarlet—which seems to dominate in these small Tricolors of the outposts—the new France's old banner

Digitized by Google

of victory raised over the reconquered patches of soil that is forever French. And it is also soaked in blood.

I remember the impression it made on us this morning when we came for the first time upon reconquered French ground. The automobile dashes along the road, the old highway between A —— and R ——. We have driven kilometer after kilometer through an alley of century-old, magnificent linden trees, which still are clothed in their gorgeous yellow-red coloring of autumn. Then suddenly the captain who accompanies us rises in the car, flings his arms out to both sides, and says, «*Voilà!*» and there is the frontier; behind us are the French, here are the first German firing-lines; from now on we are on redeemed French territory! —— It looks more like a desert than like a fertile and beautiful northern French landscape. It is indeed true, France is bled white! Here there is not a green blade nor a live branch left. On our left has been a forest; it has withered and died; only battered and splintered stumps are left, rising to the height of one or two yards from the ground. It looks as though a fire had swept along and burned every tree. Torn and twisted branches stick out of the soil, raked and harrowed by shrapnel, but the branches are leafless and blackened as if a sea of lava had covered them for hundreds of years. It is a landscape laboriously dug out after an all-destroying

Digitized by Google

deluge. We are in a cemetery of a city of a million inhabitants, with stone columns and granite monuments as far as the eye can reach. Thus the trees of the forest seem to have stiffened under the hail of iron which for months has been pouring down upon them.

And the villages which we have traversed in these reconquered areas, fire and steel have almost razed them to the ground. Why should we hide anything? The French themselves can bear to face the facts. Victory is dear. But every inch won back is the soil of the fatherland, the holy soil of France. *Qu'importe les sacrifices!* What matters the cost, be it ever so high! Houses can be rebuilt, cities can be raised again—if only the ground on which we build is our own! And the Tricolor flutters over the ruins.

A regiment of French troops came marching toward us a couple of kilometers back of the lines. It was a regiment of the Midi, the south of France, and it was coming directly from the rifle-pits farthest ahead. Thirty-six hours previously they had taken part in an attack, had seized the German positions, one kilometer in width, and afterward «cleared» the reconquered ground. It was from that job they were coming now, and they were on their way toward the rear for a few days' rest. Such a sight is not easily forgotten. They were in full marching outfit, each man carrying an

Digitized by Google

enormous knapsack, a bread-bag (*la musette*), an extra bag for private matters and home rations, finally the rifle. It was a heavy burden, which the terrible conditions of the roads made no lighter. The highways were like seas of mud. It had rained a long time, and the marshy ground on both sides of the Somme was soaked with moisture. The artillery and transport wagons tried here and there to drive over the fields along the road; but the wheels sank to the hubs and if the teams had not been double—eight or ten, even up to sixteen horses to each wagon—the heavy loads would simply have been stuck fast in the mud. Somehow they managed to advance, but it was hard on the poor horses. Fortunately they were gradually being replaced by motor trucks, big as houses, the so-called *camions*. They splashed their way, thousands of them, through mud and slush; going forward by one route, returning by another, and so efficiently was this traffic managed that hardly ever did one see an abandoned wagon. Beside the string of wagons were the soldiers. Tired and worn they trudged along, through the reddish-yellow clay, the consistency of porridge, with which they were plastered up to the tops of their high boots, and every step through the slippery mire cost them an effort. No one seeing these men, as they came plodding along, could tell that they were in uniform; so be-

Digitized by Google

spattered, soaked, and impregnated were they with clay and mire from the trenches and roads, that their whole bodies from the linings of their collars to the soles of their boots were encased in a plaster of mud. They might have been convicts or a procession of brown and dried mummies. Bearded and grim-looking, rightly bearing the name of *poilus*, to a degree that one might take them for types of savages recalled from the primeval forest, or formidable specimens from a Barnum's curiosity show.

But suddenly, as the lines filed past the automobiles, which halted to allow them to do so, we saw the eyes of these savages, coming straight from the conquered trenches. It was like looking into a sea of fire, hundreds of sparks flashing from the same mighty blaze. We felt cold shivers down our backs. The reflex of the fight a few hours ago still gleamed in their eyes. Such are the eyes of those who have seen *all, all*! Such is the image of a soul which a little time before realized that it must perish or conquer—and did conquer. They are the victors, so fresh from their victory that the whole scale of the emotions they experienced still clings to the retina: the horror, the anger, the hate, the desire to kill and strike down. Sparks flashed from the eyes of these men. It was more than indomitable courage—it seemed more like

Digitized by Google

a superhuman triumph—that gleamed out of those black and brown eyes as they filed past. The victors! —a mob of small, mud-bespattered men from the Midi!—the «lion-tamers from the Somme!» As they passed us they shouted: «We look nice, don't we? Just coming from a dance in the trenches. *Mais on les a eus!* We made them hop again yesterday!» Will the world ever know all about these heroes of France? And they are of that nation which has been slandered and called enervated and degenerate.

We have been down to see the captured German positions. I now understand why they believed themselves safe, and that no power on earth could dislodge them against their will. There were forts and blockhouses in every direction. Steel and cement walls a yard thick, foundations for the artillery, hundreds of armored machine-gun nests dug into the ground, with only an inch-wide opening where the mouth of the machine-gun could swing freely back and forth. And all these defensive works were so cleverly and shrewdly arranged in conformity with the nature of the landscape, that it would seem impossible for the French even to discover whence came the millions of projectiles, the tons of metal, that were hurled at them. On a stretch of five hundred meters we wiggled through a complicated net of barb wire, all shot to

Digitized by Google

pieces; the iron posts which had served as supports were fastened in concrete; even after the French artillery had turned the whole entanglement upside down, and the French clippers had cut the wires, we found it hard to crawl through it. And right in front of us was a whole mine field, covering several hundred yards, which simply was to have been blown up, had the French gotten that far. It is true that most of the mines would not have exploded, for the French artillery had contrived to dig out the electric lines and cut them off. But the whole thing was a hell to contemplate.

We descended into an entirely underground city where a couple of German companies had been taken prisoners, helplessly «locked in» as in a mouse-trap. The trenches had been badly battered by the awful bombardment of the French artillery, over half the German battalion had perished, and then the remainder sought refuge in the bomb-proof cellars. But here the Frenchmen overwhelmed them before they could get out again, at precisely the moment when the last French shrapnel exploded at the entrance.

It was strange to go down below and see how the Germans had made themselves at home. One would almost believe that they had planned never to move out again. There was, for example, a comple electric-

Digitized by Google

light plant with power station and huge generators in these «houses,» ten, twelve, fifteen meters underground. We found large assembly-rooms, with rows of benches, a speaker's platform, in one even fresh wreaths of heather along the walls; presumably the place had been used as a church. Now it can, at any rate, be used as a funeral chapel. There are corpses enough.

We found «*Küche*» painted over the entrance to another room farther in, and there are undoubtedly many towns where the community kitchen is not better or more plentifully equipped than these underground camp kitchens.

Next we came to a passage which was marked by a posted notice, «*Durchgang nur für Offiziere.*» Back there were the villas of the officers. The French had let the villas remain almost intact, just as they had found them. One was called «Saxon Switzerland.» Some of the men who made themselves at home here must have had good taste as well as appreciation of comfort. That the bathrooms had both hot- and cold-water pipes is not so surprising, but how they could have freighted down the pianos seems more strange. Here they played both twelve- and sixteeen-handed. There were cloth-covered card-tables along every wall. Over the entrance to this «Casino» was an inscription

Digitized by Google

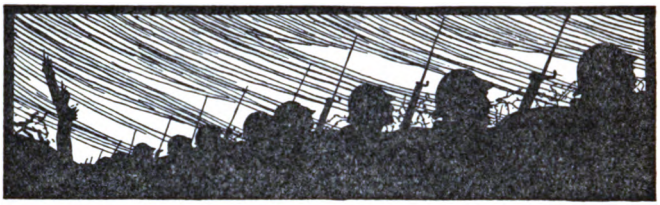
—painted in huge letters—which must now be painful for the German officers:

«Macht Joffre auch ein bös' Gesicht,
hier treffen uns seine Granaten nicht!»

And in beautiful, ornate letters was added, «*Erbaut März 1916.*» Below the French had fastened a plain board with the inscription: «*Repris par n. n. division française le* ——» giving the date when the reconquest occurred.

Beside it was the Tricolor.

Digitized by Google



The Front-line Trenches

WE ARE on our way to the front-line trenches. The automobiles have been left far behind us; all superfluous baggage must be put aside. On the other hand, we have been told to carry canes, strong walking-sticks. And then we put on our steel helmets and fasten the gas mask and container to our shoulders. *En avant!*

We have, of course, made up our minds to be perfectly calm and not allow our nerves to get the better of us, whatever may happen. And now we can do nothing one way or the other—from the moment we are across the hill we are in the hands of fate—it is merely a question of keeping head and nerves under control. Oh yes, we know very well that we are confirmed fatalists—nevertheless, ten minutes later we are struggling with an attack of nervousness. The first crisis usually lasts five or ten minutes; the second, if it does come afterward, is much shorter and is all over in an instant. It begins by being a little

Digitized by Google

uneasy because you no longer hear either your colleagues' voice or your own. I watch the American's round face and the movements of his eyes and mouth, and note that he keeps bellowing something. He is the most talkative of the company—he comes directly from the Diaz rebellion in Mexico—but this time he talks only to the wind and the clattering roll of the drums. We are as it were inside a tin box which is being bombarded with rocks from all sides; and now there is a rattling on the tin above, below, and around us—from all directions. At the same time the earth begins to heave and we are conscious of having knees. The first cannon-shot explodes close by our side. It feels like being struck in the forehead by a cudgel; the nerves tighten involuntarily. The flashes come more and more rapidly; the cannon cannot be seen, nor the men firing them, for they are carefully covered by logs, branches, and ripped-up sacks. We see the flash and the smoke rising from the dead-brush piles, and from twenty or thirty points over the field there rises a thin bluish haze from the dugouts where the guns are hidden. It is unusual to see a human being; a water-carrier may appear among the barbed-wire nets, balancing his water-pail. Otherwise all life is lived underground. A blue head advances toward us; it looks ghastly, but it is only a wounded soldier

Digitized by Google

dragging himself forward on his knees in a partly collapsed trench.

The whole area here has been retaken from the Germans. The forest is hacked down and the ground plowed by shrapnel. It is like the view of a moon-landscape; mounds and grooves, shell-holes, side by side over the whole area; one may think that this is an exaggeration, but as a matter of fact there is not an inch of earth throughout all these square kilometers but has been churned by the shells. If the shell-holes were not so large it would be the best imaginable harrowing of the soil; but the majority of the «marmites» are so deep that one might easily set a table for eight or ten people inside of them, and still the waiters would have plenty of room for serving.

There is a small knoll in front of us to the left, and from the inside of it comes a tremendous boom from one of the big new French guns. We lie down flat and crawl forward. Gradually, as we come closer, we discover that the entire knoll is nothing but an immense heap of ruins. Our captain, who is in the lead, stops; the rest of us crawl over to him, and, lying on his stomach, he yells to tell us that we are now in the park of the château. That heap of ruins is all that is left of Count X——'s famous castle, one of the largest and finest in northern France. The owner

Digitized by Google

was in active service at another part of the front; but the other day he came back on furlough to look after his home, which he knew had been occupied by the Germans. He stayed three days in the cellar. He would stick his head out through an opening between two rocks and stand thus motionless for hours at a time. He said he couldn't even recognize the ground. There had been some ridges to the left of the road, and a large beautiful park surrounding the château.

The soldiers stick candles in the necks of bottles, and pilot us through the cellar entrance to the *boyau*, which leads to the foremost trenches. We stop for a moment at the crossing from the ruins of the château to the connecting passage. One by one, and only for one short moment each, we are allowed to raise our heads above the trench in order to get a survey of the area. A German air torpedo lies burning on the parapet. I notice a piece of board stuck into the ground two yards in front of us; «*cadavre*» is written on it in blue letters. A dead horse is lying in the roadside ditch. Its belly is ripped open and both front legs are shot off. The airplanes are droning above us.

And now begins our experience in the trench. It was taken from the Germans a couple of days ago, after an intense bombardment on the part of the French. The result is that in many places it has caved in and is filled up, although the French soldiers went

Digitized by Google

to work to clear and repair it immediately after taking it. But it is so narrow that we continually rub against the walls on both sides as we walk along, and if we have to pass a soldier, we must press flat against the clay wall in order to do so. After five minutes we look as if dipped in mud; our clothes are completely covered with the yellowish-brown wet clay, new layers constantly being deposited over the ones dried and hardened. As we walk along, the trench divides; but we continue in the one farthest to the right, which forms the limit of the recovered area. At its outer edge begins No Man's Land, which in this part of the front terminates in a point, so that both Frenchmen and Germans a few hundred yards ahead *occupy the same trench*! The lieutenant who was sent along with us tells how this came about: During the attack the other day, when the foremost French grenade-throwers stormed through the trench, they drove the retreating Germans before them through the very same ditch where we now stand. It was a race of life and death. Now and then one of the Germans stopped and hurled a grenade against the pursuers, or attempted for a moment a furious hand-to-hand fight with knives or bare fists. But the French *élan* prevailed; like an irresistible wave lashed by the storm, they pushed on, farther and farther, down through the trench; over German corpses,

Digitized by Google

Frenchman number two over Frenchman number one as he fell; past one corner after another, zigzag through the excavations, until suddenly at a sharp turn of the ditch a massive iron gate was locked with a slam by the last fleeing German! An iron door, firmly imbedded in concrete straight across the ditch. There the pursuit stopped. A shower of hand grenades poured down upon the French from the other side of the iron barrier; they responded in like manner, but in this way the combat came to a standstill. For two days the hand grenades have whistled through the air from both sides of the dividing wall. «But our mines will soon be through,» says the lieutenant, «and then the gates will no longer stop us.»

The thunder of the heavy guns becomes more and more intense as we proceed. We stop in front of a cellar entrance, the descent to one of the catacombs where the soldiers seek shelter between the attacks; a sergeant comes up and gives us cotton batting to stuff into our ears—the eardrums of many of his men have burst. The ditch is so deep that we can walk upright and still be covered; only here and there, where a grenade has struck right in the edge of the trench, we must crawl on our stomachs. We hear the grenades exploding in front and back of the trench; sometimes a spattering of earth, wooden splinters, and rocks flies about our heads. We see

Digitized by Google

many queer things on the edge of the earthen parapet or sticking out of the muddy bottom of the ditch. There is a whole case of ammunition, German Mauser cartridges. Here a piece of an exploded French 400-millimeter shell; it looks like the steel plate of a boiler, and the part of it sticking out of the clay measures over half a yard. On a shelf in the trench lie two folded, mud-spattered copies of the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* of the 11th and 14th of September, this year, beside them a bottle of iodine and some bandages. Our American colleague pulls a German chiseled dagger out of the dirt, and appropriates it—there are plenty of souvenirs for those who like such things. Here in the trench we come upon a pool of blood, a head torn from the body, a Christmas carnival mask of flesh and blood. . . .

(Here a paragraph has been cut out by the censor.)

Through the periscope we look out upon the German position. The ground slopes gently forward. The air is dim and heavy, and a disagreeable odor strikes us. We put on our gas masks. There is not much to see. The field in front of us looks like a heath swept clean by fire. No life to be seen anywhere. The position-finder shows that the heap of ruins from which smoke issues between the stumps straight ahead of us is barely three hundred meters away. Two farms have been located there, and the captain gives their

Digitized by Google

names. They recur every day in the *communiqués* from Berlin and Paris. Smoke rises from the ruins. Land of desolation all around us. Through the telescope we see nothing but these two heaps of ruins, abandoned on an endless plain, over which the thunderstorm of war rolls on endlessly, unceasingly. . . .

Digitized by Google

In the Argonne Forest

We drive into the Argonne forest.

It is like being moved back an era of time. A new life is disclosed to us. We are back in remote antiquity; primitive life surrounds us; men live in huts of earth and stone diminishing in height as we proceed. Finally everything alive that we see comes up from the ground. Men live in caves. We are near the front.

A caravan of hundreds of horses are trailing along the mud road through which we are struggling. The horses are big and rugged; their hoofs make tracks like those of a mammoth in the soft mud, and they lumber along at a snail-like pace. But the horses do not wear the harness that we are accustomed to see hereabout, only traces around neck and belly, and they are hauling logs—one huge trunk for every four horses—through the mud. The logs are intended for the erection of more huts. Mules come along with

Digitized by Google

soldiers as drivers; every mule has a mountain of straw piled on its back; the straw is brought to furnish bedding for the foremost huts. The men do not shout; there is no noise; the talk is subdued, almost in whispers; we are in the realm of silence, *l'empire de silence*. But above us, in the moisture-laden air, rolls the everlasting thunder of the guns, cut now and then by the sharp whistle of a passing bullet. Through the thicket we glimpse the ridge of the hill in front of us, and the gray streak shows where the French have dug in; two hundred meters beyond lie the Germans.

It is now midwinter, but there is no snow, only moisture. And the trees in the Argonne forest are stripped and bare, while the blanket of moss among the tall trunks of oak and birch has received a new covering of yellowish-red leaves. Here and there we can look up into the gray December sky. A buzzing noise comes from above, as though a bumblebee were in flight among the trees, and then suddenly we see the receding wings of a «Taube» high above us. No shot is fired at it, and it makes no effort to hit us. Is it possible that the German flyer cannot see this whole town of huts lying scattered among the trees? No, for the roofs of the huts are covered with moss, leaves, and branches. A flyer sees nothing but the forest be-

Digitized by Google

low him, clear down. Where there is an opening the soldiers have made imitation brushwood, fastening it to wires and raising it to the tops of the trees. And the men either stand still or else go down into their holes when the bumblebee hums above them. Thus the forest betrays nothing of what it hides. I do not know how many hundred thousand men now are living like moles in the burrows of the Argonne forest. Even if I did know, I should not be allowed to say. I only know that the whole forest is alive. We travel from one city of huts in this immense domain, across rivers and brooks, along lakes, up hill and down; we are traveling through the African jungle—by canoe, from one negro village to another. Now and then we also board a funny little railway with rails two feet apart, and ride on an open car over to the next hut.

Here we are at the town of «Beau Séjour.»

The name is there on a plank nailed to a post between two trees over yonder, where the road turns in. The town lies a short distance back of the foremost complex of trenches, hence the huts are high and well arranged. There are more people in it than in a regular town of medium size; thirty to forty men are lodged in each barracks, the chief in a blockhouse, the «citadel,» with a three-color pennant in front of it. Like other villages, this one has palisades and other fortifications surrounding it, for hostile tribes

Digitized by Google

are near by and treacherous attacks may be attempted any time. We contemplate these trenches extending in a double row around the entire «city»; in front of the ditches and between them lies a jungle of wire netting, fastened to the trunks of trees and to stakes driven into the ground, with the wires woven criss-cross into one another and so close that one cannot put one's foot into them anywhere without being scratched. Woe to the thieves who are trying to pick their way here. Guards with rifles loaded are posted at every corner of the inclosure, and patrols make the rounds of the camp day and night.

But within the town there is peace and the even pursuit of everyday life. Half a hundred men stand on an open space—the town's market place—pumping water into large wooden casks. The water comes from a spring situated three kilometers distant, and is conveyed here through two large iron pipes above-ground. There is a small lake below the camp, and there the soldiers bathe, get water for washing and for the animals to drink. It is cool here in the forest, —for it is almost Christmas time—and the wind blows, but a company of men are bathing in the lake; strong, muscular bodies are tumbling about in the waves raised by the wind; the soldiers splash water on one another, wrestle, have swimming races like boys on a picnic in summer. How plain, sound, and

Digitized by Google

simple life may again become! Over in the camp the men sit outside their huts, mending and brushing their clothes—though the brushing probably does little good, for every garment is impregnated by the yellowish-white clay, which has changed the sky-blue soldier into a bricklayer. Some are busy on their guns—a lieutenant is about to inspect arms and equipment. The bread-wagons from the camp bakery in the rear have halted down by the road and six men from each platoon present themselves, each taking an armful of beautiful white, soft bread for distribution among the huts. From a rice-boiler a pailful of hot rice soup is carried to each troop. «*Boucherie*» (butchery) is inscribed on a shed at the edge of the camp; the daily seven steers have been butchered, cut up and divided; each half troop does its own cooking separately. We taste the food—it is excellent—and ask the boys if the food is as good and abundant every day. Oh yes; no reason to complain of the food. They tell a story about a German *Feldwebel* (sergeant-major) who was taken prisoner the other day. When he was brought into the «negro village» he ate for two and a half hours without stopping, then fell into a deathlike sleep lasting fourteen hours; and when he woke up he began to tell how the Germans carried on. There are more and more of that sort of runaway.

Digitized by Google

If one has been in a lumber camp in a Norwegian forest, one knows how the huts of the French *poilus* in the Argonne forest look. Bunks, usually in two tiers, are fastened up along the walls, the lower kept clear of the hard-tamped earth floor by wooden slats and a layer of leaves or pine needles. During the winter months a stove is put up in the center of the floor. The fuel is birch branches and twigs. There is an open space for dining-table and benches. Each man has rifle and pack in bed with him. A woolen blanket and a heavy sweater are furnished every man from the supply depots. Steam rises from the wet garments hung up to dry all around the room.

The wretched rain! The boys dig drains around each hut and cover the roofs with sod, branches, and earth in order to keep the water out. It is hard to keep up morale under these conditions, but the *poilus* manage it somehow, and accept every dispensation of fortune with good nature, and a joke besides. The *esprit gaulois* finds new outlets. «*Villa pluviana*» is inscribed over the entrance to one hut; «*Quartier sousmarin*» (submarine quarters) reads a street sign between two rows of barracks. «Are you insured against drowning? You can swim, of course,» the boys shout to us as we go down the steps to their water-drenched lodgings.

And then we proceed farther. There are two graves

Digitized by Google

over by the edge of the road. The usual sight—a little mound of earth marked off by four stakes, the wooden cross bearing the regimental number, and for a wreath at the top, a faded cap. Nobody has put flowers on these graves, but the trees round about have dropped a covering of their yellowish-red leaves on the mound. Three yards from the graves is a little hut of twigs and branches, where soldiers are quartered—the living and the dead at close quarters. Life here in the forest has taught one to see how finely drawn and accidental is the line between them. Death is near and always in sight. It loiters among the living and needs no cemetery to be remembered. Look at the huge trees on either side of the road; their branches have been torn off and their trunks splintered by shrapnel! They look as if struck by lightning, every one of them. Now we see holes scooped out of the road; enormous pot-holes lying edge to edge are linked together along the road ditches. Here they surely have had a hot time. Pieces of shrapnel are strewn along the road like heaps of rubbish near a machine shop. The rumbling in the air increases.

As we go on, the huts sink, becoming gradually lower. They are no longer built of lumber, but of earth and rocks, and the thickness of the roofs increases. Against the big shells nothing less than a cover of a yard and a half of rocks and sod will be

Digitized by Google

safe. One thing strikes us with astonishment; suddenly out of the ground project enormous iron pipes, which disappear in the next earthen mound. Why these factory pipes out here in the backwoods? They are tubes for compressed air, leading from the «factory,» a few kilometers back, to the mine galleries in front of the first trench where the earth is scientifically tunneled and the hole filled with dynamite. Farther on we see underground electric and telephone cables.

Finally the huts disappear from the surface of the ground. We descend by steps into the caverns below. We are now within the firing zone and hear the shells exploding above us. We are in the world of *tranchées, boyaux,* rifle-pits, and connecting passages. The clay floor slopes evenly and the passage becomes darker and darker as we proceed. At first we see nothing, stumble down the steps, and are struck with terror when human voices sound close by our side in the darkness. Gradually we become used to it and notice that here and there in the walls of the passage through which we pass are doors opening into large cavities—*les abris* (shelters)—the «Catacombs.» In these are soldiers on the alert, ready to turn out on the shortest notice. A strange sight, these mole-men, sitting there quietly, waiting four meters below the surface, *on duty.* Their job is to sit there a whole

Digitized by Google

day, waiting. When the alarm is sounded, they are the first to go into action. They sit in complete marching order, their rifles ready. It is pitch dark, for they have to be saving of light and power. When the captain turns on his electric flashlight, it looks as if hundreds of mummies were lodged on the shelf along the wall. There are cross passages everywhere, zigzag fashion; the earth is hollowed out round about us and we look upon stores of shells and ammunition. Through a perpendicular shaft a rope ladder descends to the canal where they are leading a mine forward to the German trench to blow it up. Farthest up sits one man, squeezed into a narrow hole and operating an electric boring-machine. He is nine meters below the surface and only six or seven meters this side of the German first line. «But they are boring, too,» he says. «Put your ear to the ground and hear how they are hacking away.» And sure enough, we hear the whir from the German mine, close by. It is like the scratch in a microphone right in our ear. We retrace our steps and go up a little. We meet a procession in the *boyau,* but in the flickering light of the torch we can't see what it is until our guide in a dry and matter-of-fact way says: «Ah, *voilà!* death is with us today also.» It is a corpse, which is carried past, rolled up in a piece of canvas.

Daylight suddenly appears ahead of us. Gray fig-

Digitized by Google

ures move about like pictures on a motion-picture screen in front of the opening to the tunnel. A strong, pungent odor as of sulphur meets us. And suddenly we feel the ground shaking beneath us.

We are in the French front-line trenches. The Germans are firing their heavy cannon.

We go in among the gray shadows.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PART II

STORIES FROM THE FRONT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Sall Uhu—The Lion of Senegal

ONE day last fall I received the war cross. The French *croix de guerre*—with star and palm. It was for Sall Uhu's sake and due to his merit. Not mine. But let me tell how it all happened.

Sall Uhu Massamba—I almost tremble at writing his name.

He wasn't nice. According to European or Parisian standards of beauty he certainly was not nice. I remember the first time I saw him. It was over on the Boulevard des Italiens, just outside the Crédit Lyonnais, a day in early spring, 1916. There was sunshine, and a gentle breeze fanned the boulevard. Chestnut buds about to open, thin, feathery clouds impelled by soft breezes, sailing away under the deep-blue vault of a clear sky, bespoke the approach of spring. Life had again one short, happy moment, when all was well, the past was forgotten, even the months of darkness, which had seemed like one long, comfortless night.

Suddenly there was a disturbance on the boulevard. A dense huddling together of people around a

Digitized by Google

center which at first one could not clearly make out. Nothing sensational, apparently, this time, however; nobody run over, no worn-out horse fallen in his traces, no pickpocket or other crook whom the police have nabbed and are making off with. Something funny was happening—people laughed and gesticulated, shouts of merriment were exchanged among the crowds, little boys were whistling. «Tipperary» accompanied the performance—we were still in the good old «Tipperary» days—and even inveterate asphalt-beaters stopped for a moment, allowing their *blasé* countenances to light up with an indulgent smile.

When I came up to the mob I saw what it was. In the midst of the crowd was a gigantic negro, seven feet tall, a back as broad as a barn door, face homely as sin, like one of Asbjornsen's trolls or Skeibrok's gorillas—Sall Uhu Massamba, a colonial soldier in sky-blue uniform, whose only equipment was the empty haversack hanging by his side. A good thing that it was daylight and on a crowded boulevard. Had I met him in the evening in a lonely spot, I undoubtedly should have made a quick *détour*. That's how he looked. The little girls crossed themselves,—«*Mon Dieu! quelle figure! Il est beau à faire peur!*» («Good God! what a face! Isn't he a fright!»)—and convulsively held one another close. But they couldn't

Digitized by Google

help looking at him. And we all looked. At first I could not make out what the negro was doing. He was talking to the people. He did not stop, but prattled on as he walked, gesticulating wildly. A regular moving cataract of words. Then he sang a piece. An ordinary regimental band could not have drowned his tremendous bass, which rent the air of the boulevard. Now and then he pointed to one of the pretty midinettes in his escort, made an inviting gesture, blew a kiss at them, while his mouth opened in a wide grin, disclosing a double row of teeth so sound and gleaming white, that they would have made an invaluable advertisement for any concern heralding the merits of tooth paste or powder. His eyes rolled incessantly, flashing white in their ebony setting.

And now the thing happened of which I can give no satisfactory explanation. I had had my fill of looking and was about to continue on my way, steering wide of the crowd, but in the same direction. As I remember it, I was bound for the editorial rooms of the *Matin.* Suddenly the negro pushed through and before I realized what was happening I felt a hand on my shoulder—indeed I felt it!

As it fell on me from above, I suddenly formed a picture in my mind—a pile-driver pounding stakes into the mud. The hand was the ram—it felt like a thousand tons—and I was the stake. I sank to my

Digitized by Google

knees, but the next instant I was jerked upward and hung dangling over the pavement, free of all contact, except between my poor right shoulder and the iron grip from above.

«*Eh bien, alors, mon vieux, ça va, hein?*» («Well, old man, how goes it?») It was the negro's voice, and the question was addressed to me. I glanced slantingly upward. «Oh yes, I was «going» pretty well, if he would only let go my shoulder!» He loosened his hold, grasped my arm and shoved it under his, insistent, friendly, and convincing. He cleared a way through the crowd, and the negro and I walked along the boulevard arm in arm. An exultant yell rose from the throng back of us. I heard laughter and offensive shouts. But I paid no heed to the mob and devoted my attention to my companion. The man-eater! He kept on talking in his rumbling bass voice, and little by little it dawned on me that he was trying to express himself in French. At once I became immensely interested and both answered and asked questions; our conversation became very lively. My problem now was as soon as possible and without making myself ridiculous to get away from the mob, down into a side street, a house, anywhere, for here on the boulevard pedestrians stopped every moment and stared in wonder and amazement at the negro and

Digitized by Google

his prey. Never in my life have I been the object of so much attention; never shall I be again.

Finally I ventured, with a gentle pressure against the log of an arm which encircled mine, to suggest the idea that a small glass, a bock, a curaçao, or something in that line might not be amiss on a sunny April day like this.—Well, yes, if I insisted! But he had to be at the Gare de l'Est at 12:55, for his train left then. He was to be back at the front, near Verdun, the next morning early.—But we made our way to a restaurant, where I found a dark corner away over in the farthest end.

And in that corner I discovered Sall Uhu Massamba. Got a little glimpse of the movements behind that extraordinary mask of his. In the first place, I was relieved of a misapprehension. I had the belief—like the majority of the crowd on the boulevard—that the negro was, if not drunk, at least a little bit «primed.» But he was not. He had not had a drop all day, with the exception of two bowls of black coffee early in the morning. On the whole, he did not care for strong drinks, and the glass of wine I had placed before him did not interest him greatly. He sipped it, almost timidly, like a well-trained, half-grown boy. And my cigarettes fared no better. To be sure, he accepted one, but was a very incompetent smoker; the cigarette went out for him continually

Digitized by Google

and he stealthily threw it away after having chewed it to pieces. But he could and did talk. I have rarely heard such fluency of speech—the words just poured from him. The language he used was copiously mixed with turns and phrases pertaining to a latitude quite different from that of Paris, but had enough of French in it to enable me to catch the main part of that torrent of eloquence that was poured over me, and in a surprisingly short time I was in full possession of the principal facts of his life. He was quite effusive in his revelations and the first person was the main pivot of his conversation.

He was from Senegal—from a village in the interior of the country, near Kayes. Sall Uhu Massamba was his name; he was unmarried and free, twenty-four years of age (I had judged him to be at least six years older). One day in October, 1914, a French recruiting agent arrived at Kayes, and Sall, who up to that time had had something to do on a river boat, when he was not working on «his own hook» in the forest, enlisted at once. Many of his comrades did the same, and Sall was the best tripo-hurler and trail-finder of them all. When he stood in the market place he could look over the heads of all his comrades. The French «driver» had been kind and brotherly toward Sall. He had exhibited a whole storehouse of looking-glasses and diamonds; he in-

Digitized by Google

Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder—indeed I felt it.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

sisted that Sall must go with him to France, where he would get money and meat every day, fine clothes with gold braid on them, a rifle all his own, and hundreds, thousands of cartridges, as many as he wanted! There was hunting beyond comparison over there, in the palm groves of Europe! Hunting was the most fascinating thing that Sall knew. One week later he was at Dakar. With eight hundred companions he suddenly found himself embarked on a ship. He did not exactly know how it had happened. And then they sailed and sailed «around the world.» Sall got terribly sick. But one day they came to a town called Marseilles. And then it was *terriblement* cold. He had never in his life been so cold.

Now for more than a year Sall had been fighting the *boches*. He used this word often, and always with an ugly sneer. The *boches* were terrible, affirmed Sall. They would do anything that was evil. They had uniforms with sharp spikes and cannon as big as houses. Sometimes they fired so that the earth shook. Bang! (Sall demonstrated the cannon, and the whole café started in terror.) But that wasn't the worst. The worst was that they made a certain kind of air that nobody could see, but which was so dangerous that snake poison was nothing compared with it. This they shot off with invisible cannon, mostly at night.

Digitized by Google

One morning Sall found six of his comrades stiff and cold in death, but with no blood on their bodies. They had been on duty down in a valley, and the Germans had puffed at them. And did I know what the *boches* did to the women and children? Sall knew things that I did not know. It was horrible! And nothing had been heard from the boys from Senegal who one day had been taken prisoners by the Germans. They are worse than man-eaters—*anthropophages!*—said Sall.

I sat and talked with him for an hour or more, until he had to take the underground railway up to the Gare de l'Est.

But what had he been doing in Paris?—Oh, he was on leave. His captain had told him that he would be free four days, and two days extra because he had distinguished himself *au feu*. The captain he was a splendid fellow! He had given Sall an address in Paris where he could sleep and eat all he wanted for nothing, and besides, the captain had given him a handful of money, when he got on the train up there by—Sall did not remember the name of the station. Sall was not very strong in remembering names of places. He did not know *where* he had fought at the front. But they had fought and marched and fought again over the whole front. Often a day and night at a stretch, on plains and in forests, but mostly on

Digitized by Google

the plains. And it is never so muddy in Senegal as here, said Sall. But, of course, names of places. . . . Sall was much interested in knowing where I came from. He wanted to know all about me. Norway? Norway? Oh yes, somewhere near Russia. Well, then he knew. North of Spain. I mustn't think that Sall was just a common soldier from Senegal. As to race and family, not much to brag about, perhaps. Sall had never known his father and mother, and he had no other relatives. But his captain had said that he was an «intelligent» soldier, and ever since they landed in Marseilles he had been a sort of leader of his comrades. «I might get to be a sergeant, perhaps, and, in time, even colonel. Nothing is impossible nowadays,» Sall's captain used to say. Even Joffre had started as a common private. «I usually lead the troop when we go into action,» Sall said. «And I can read and write already. Do you want to see?» said he as he pulled a stub of a lead pencil from his coat pocket, and before I could draw another breath he scrawled on the stone table at which we were sitting his full name, with scroll and all.

Digitized by Google

I have seen it often since then. This was the first time.

He had been four days in Paris—without seeing a soul whom he knew. Now he was again due at the front. He longed to see his comrades and to go hunting again. Heat and sunshine were in the air. His blood throbbed with life. «*Kélé, Kélé, gamougamou! Hoi!*» This, too, was a kind of primeval forest, with sky-high buildings like trees on all sides. And so he loitered along the boulevard, singing. Strong and sound as a giant, seven feet tall, broad as a barn door. While the monkeys and parrots and small orang-outangs slipped in and out between his long legs, and raised a perfect chorus of howls in his wake. «*Ils sont drôles, les parisiens, hein?*» said Sall. «And how small they are! Little tots,» added he. And it seemed to me that there was a tone of contempt in his voice.

He left at 12:25.

Four days later I received a letter from Sall.

I had given him my card, my address, when we parted at the station, with scarcely any purpose in mind, perhaps rather in the certainty, that I should never see or hear from him again. But there was the letter, in his own handwriting, written by Sall Uhu Massamba, private in the 4th Colonial Regiment,

Digitized by Google

25th Company, secteur postal No. 9. As soon as I read the letter the thought came to me that from now on Sall was my *filleul*, my war godson. I would adopt him, be his *parrain*, look after his letters and other mail, and show him that there was at least one person back of the front who thought of him now and then.

A book might and ought to be written about the relations of *filleul* and *marraine* during the war. It would be a grateful, beautiful, and interesting theme. At least it was so during the first years of the war. About the thousands upon thousands of Frenchwomen who sought and found at the front an unknown *poilu*, usually some poor, lonely soldier whose lot it was to stand in the trenches day after day for months, without hearing a word from anybody back of the lines, without ever getting a package or a few extra sous for spending-money, with nobody to go to for companionship when the longed-for furlough came and he was released from the inferno of the firing-line. Could there possibly be anyone so completely estranged and neglected?—Yes, thousands of them. All the men from northern France and Belgium, who for more than four years were separated from their families by the wall of iron which the Germans had erected around their home country. Facing them was the line of combat, and back of it the hostile occupation. Not one word got across; they did not know

Digitized by Google

whether their kinsfolk were dead or alive. Here the Frenchwomen performed a great and noble service. And a host of grateful thoughts have gone back from the trenches to the *marraines* who so kindly helped the poor *poilu* through his worst hours of despondency. That the system got on a wrong tack later, through the interference of enterprising adventuresses during the last few months, so that, especially with reference to Paris, it became a nuisance rather than an innocent and praiseworthy work of charity, was not the fault of the real *marraines*. And if *La vie parisienne* and other obscene boulevard papers have made a fortune on their *marraine* advertisements, one should not therefore condemn the system as a whole.

But we were discussing Sall's letter.

What a letter! It amused and touched my heart at the same time. It was written in a large, clumsy, childish hand, on a piece of paper with lines carefully traced as in a copy-book. I noticed that he had taken great pains. The words were drawn with great care. The letter must have taken hours to compose. Ink blots had fallen here and there, which he had tried to scrape off with a knife or by other operations, but the «disinfection» had evidently been somewhat incomplete. And the wording of the missive was a most peculiar miscellany of acquired book language, solemn and formal turns, mixed with frank and open-hearted

Digitized by Google

personal effusions and confessions, half French, half, I presume, Senegalese expressions, whose meaning greatly puzzled me. It was a communication whose contents could not be deciphered offhand. I imagined him sitting with a model letter-writer—a *secrétaire de la correspondance*—beside him on the table, then, suddenly disgusted and tired of the whole thing, giving it up and in a desperate effort trying to compose on his own hook, blundering along with terms of his own invention, ingenuously forming the words somewhat according to the pronunciation.

The letter was addressed to «His Excellency Doctor X——» (name and address), with the sub-title, «my dear patron.» And then Sall Uhu Massamba had the honor to inform me that he had just arrived safe and sound at the camp, and at once seized the opportunity of inquiring whether the state of my health was, as he hoped, satisfactory, and expressing the wish that conditions in Paris and in my own home still continued to give no cause for anxiety. He had learned from the papers that the devilish Zeppelins had again flown over Paris «on their insatiable hunt for women and children and other innocent persons»; but now his regiment was preparing an attack on the Germans, and they were all *trés contents* in anticipation thereof. «I shall write you again as soon as conditions allow it,» it ran on, «but expect also to hear

Digitized by Google

from you as soon as possible, and that you will not forget Sall, whom you met on the boulevard in Paris. Unfortunately the cost of living at the front as well as in the rest of France, and all over the world, for that matter, has become very dear, but we have plenty of food and drink, and the weather has been wonderfully mild and pleasant since my return. I will now close my letter; my address is secteur postal No. 9, and clasping *cordialement* your hand, I am Sall Uhu Massamba» (with flourish).

The same day I sent my first letter to secteur postal No. 9, and thus began the correspondence which was to continue for many months and became to me, at any rate, a source of much diversion and joy.

Throughout that summer, fall, and winter I received letters from Sall. They came from various points; the postmark did not give the locality, but slight allusions in his letters convinced me that now he was at Soissons, then perhaps down in Alsace, again away up near the Belgian frontier. His regiment must certainly have «promenaded» along nearly the entire front. One day they were *en repos* fifteen or twenty kilometers back of the line; soon they were again moving forward, and then came brief accounts of splendid «picklings,» when they had had a «pretty hot time.» «My comrades are being gradually reduced,» wrote Sall in one letter. «Myself, I have had

Digitized by Google

nothing, except cholera for three days, after a dead horse.»—There were weeks when I got two, sometimes three letters from Sall, but again a month or two might elapse when I heard nothing from him. And these periods of silence coincided, as a rule, with the periods of activity as reported from the front. But he always came back. And if I had been negligent awhile in the matter of letters, he was worried and unhappy. «I wonder if you have had an accident,» he said. «You wrote last time that you were going to the front; I am longing to know whether you returned *sain et sauf*, for the *marmites* do not distinguish between a common soldier and a way-up journalist, not even a lieutenant-colonel—ours got killed *instantly* last week.» And also, Sall interested himself more and more in Norway. One day he discovered on the map where Norway was, and that one could sail clear from Dakar to Christiania by passing around London. I must tell him more about Norway next time. Whether they have any wild animals there, and if the soldiers up there are strong. Sall has now become a corporal; but nobody knows yet when the war will be over; when will this *butchery* end?

One day in March, 1917, I got a letter from him, dated at Nice. It was about six weeks since I had heard from him. His writing was harder to decipher than usual; his hand must have trembled, poor fel-

Digitized by Google

low. He said nothing about having been wounded—that is, he did not mention it directly (possibly an intervening letter had been lost) but referred to his convalescence as «progressing normally.»

He surely was having a fine time at Nice, because there it was properly hot; and yesterday two ladies had been at the hospital and had played violin and piano. They were two nice ladies dressed in white, and had reminded him of Senegal for that reason, and Senegal is not so very far from where he was staying. When he sat up in bed he could look out upon the sea on which they came sailing a long time ago. And now he hoped that my job was functioning properly, and *je te quitte, mon cher patron;* he again wanted *amicalement* to shake my hand.

And then, late in the summer he suddenly turned up in Paris, coming directly to my room in the rue de Seine. He was then completely recovered—*rétabli* —had even been back to the front for a couple of months, and was in every way the same old Sall. But his looks no longer frightened me, and I quickly reassured my landlord and his wife, who, anxious and curious, had followed him up the stairs. For a few days he was my guest in Paris, and we spent a good part of the time together. He interested me more and more, and I understood better his captain's remark, that he was an «intelligent» soldier. He had the rank

Digitized by Google

of corporal and the green *fourragère* about his shoulders. This, combined with his imposing figure—seven feet tall and straight as a candle—and the badge of distinguished service on his chest, was more than sufficient to explain why people often turned to look at him as he passed them on the street. The French uniform was not disgraced by that *poilu*. He was worth looking at.

One evening I took him along to the Opéra Comique and was struck by his remarks, which showed that he had an intelligent conception of the music and the performance as well as of the public. It was a very entertaining evening to me. Sall was musical and had even been offered a place in the regimental band, but he preferred to manipulate the gun and knife rather than the drumsticks, «and besides, the drum skins in France were so miserably poor that the whole thing became a fizzle.» No, with regard to drum skins the French have yet a lot to learn. The dancing on the stage, however, was very pretty. Only, it seemed to him that the *danseuses* might just as well have thrown away the long *drapes* that they were waving about. «We soldiers always leave our clothes behind when we rush to the attack,» said Sall. I had to hush him up occasionally during the performance, especially in the more lively scenes. He entered completely into the action of the play

Digitized by Google

and made loud comments on its progress. Once a shot was fired on the stage. Then Sall rose to his full height; he swung his arms and bellowed like an animal. The officials came running and wanted to know who had made the disturbance.

Both at the theater that evening and in our conversation on other occasions I got the impression that the Parisian women did not stand very high in Sall Uhu's estimation. «Spindle-legged and lank as bamboos,» said he, «and besides, they smell something awful, even worse than the trench with corpses lying there for a month. They are not so much to run after.»—In fact, Sall was quite backward and timid in the matter of women. «It would not do for a soldier to think too much about that sort of thing,» said he.

I have already mentioned that Sall was much interested in Norway, and now during our stay together his talks often came back to it. He was fond of traveling. It would be great fun to see Norway, too. Did they travel on river boats in Norway? Sall had the right to claim that he could steer a river boat. And there would be no rapids that he could not manage to clear. And were there many river boats in my village at home? Sall had now also become an expert at writing and figuring. He wrote letters for nearly all the comrades in his company—that is, letters to Senegal, of course. And figuring! Two times eight

Digitized by Google

are sixteen, there were 169 men in his company, divided by three made 56, plus one in the blank file on the left wing. I had large accounts, too, probably, being a writer. In Senegal all the officers and big writers had a secretary or «boy,» as they called him. Sall could easily sleep in the corridor. In the *tranchées* it was often wet, and door mats were not used much in Senegal. Besides, he could perhaps use his military coat, even if he ceased being a soldier. But this *tuerie* would never end.

When we went out for a walk, Sall was interested in everything. The big department stores, the show windows, of the «Printemps,» «Lafayette,» etc., had an especial attraction for him. And more than anything else did the ladies' goods seem wonderful to him. He could remain standing for five or ten minutes before an assortment of bright-colored skirts or a collection of parasols. He said nothing, just stood and looked at them with an expression of rapture. Then he nervously scratched his head with his huge paws and heaved a deep sigh. If we came to a window exhibit of boots and shoes, dainty little footwear trimmed with velvet or mother-of-pearl, he could hardly be pulled away. He glanced down at his own huge «rafts,» then looked into the window again, as if spellbound by a pair of light-blue silk shoes. I suggested that we go in and inquire about the price.

Digitized by Google

But that was not to be thought of. He grabbed me by the arm and started off. In matters of that sort he was the most modest person I have ever met. He reproved me for sending him little presents now and then, and money he had no use for at all! At the front they got everything they needed, and tobacco he wasn't crazy about.

I missed Sall after he returned to the front. And, judging from his letters, he did not forget me, either. During the fall and part of the winter things were more quiet at the front. «I think I am infected with *cafard*,» he wrote me about Christmas time. «They don't allow us to advance as we want to. And my thoughts often transport themselves back to Paris, but also to Senegal, now that winter is here. And it is a long time since I was in Kayes.»

Months passed, and the war continued. Then suddenly one day in April I got a joyous letter from Sall. He had gotten six weeks' furlough for a trip to Senegal! Because he was a soldier of *grande valeur* his captain had said, and «*tout à fait remarquable*,» as it was written on a piece of paper he had just received. Then he continued—and now I quote literally: «Now I will ask you, my dear *patron*, to send me at once a complete suit of linen to wear in the hot sun. Sleeve length, 1 meter, and be sure to have it wide and roomy across the back—well, you know.

Digitized by Google

And of white linen. But it must be sent by return mail, because Marseilles is our first stop—before Saturday. I am very happy. But I must also have three combs, a photograph, the skirt, and two white «camp shoes,» as you remember from the boulevard, and a cinematograph. *Je quitte, mon cher F. F., en te serrant bien fortement la main et bien sincèrement.* Sall Uhu Massamba.

«P. S. It is urgent, as above noted.»

The order put me to much doubt and speculation. The linen suit and other articles of clothing, the «camp shoes» included, all well and good, but what did he mean by the photograph? and the cinematograph? Was it a kodak he wanted, perhaps? I went downtown at once and sent him a package; I regretted that it did not contain all the articles, but I asked him to try and get the missing ones in Marseilles. Good-by and good luck, Sall! Let me hear from you often when you reach Senegal.

About three weeks later I received a letter from him written at Dakar. It was only a brief greeting, scribbled in haste: «We have just landed and the sea was fine. I add my sentiments to yours in the conviction of a *victoire définitive.* This evening already I hurry on to Kayes. The sun is just as it was in 1914. Yours cordially, etc. The combs and other things I

Digitized by Google

have in my bag, but not the cinematograph from Marseilles. Thanking you in haste and more later.»

This was the next to the last letter I ever received from Sall. The rest can be told in a few words.

We had a good deal to worry about in Paris during the following spring and summer. The «Gothas» and «Berthas» and the insane dash of the Germans against Paris. Then came Château-Thierry, the second battle of the Marne, the deluge of fire in the night between the 14th and 15th of July, when the thunder of cannon rolled in upon the city; then finally, victory—battle upon battle, incessantly! Now and then I thought of Sall Uhu and wondered how he faréd. I heard nothing more from him. But he, too, undoubtedly had something to worry about.

One day in August another African negro came to my room. He was a dapper gentleman with the straps of a second lieutenant and the white cuffs sticking out from sleeves of his uniform. He wore also a bright-colored tie, and was altogether a perfect dandy. The first thing he told me as soon as he got inside the door was that M. Diagne, the deputy from Senegal, was his second cousin. I knew, of course, M. Diagne. Everybody knew him. I asked the lieutenant, uniform and all, to be seated, and poured some liquor into him. Then he became very frank and condescending. He was an interpreter, *officier d'in-*

Digitized by Google

terprète, in the same regiment in which Sall Uhu Massamba served, and it was Sall who had given him my address in Paris. Ah, Sall!—How was he getting along? Had he returned from Senegal, and where was he now?—Why, Sall was quite all right. He had come back from Senegal two months ago, and had again taken his place in the ranks. I knew, of course, that the colonial troops continually distinguished themselves during the counter-offensive. We fly from one victory to another, said the interpreter. My regiment has just had the Legion of Honor pinned to its banner—President Poincaré himself was at Noyon and decorated the flag. But now I expect we are bound for Champagne. We are always sent into the hottest of the fight—always into the front line. The Senegalese and the Foreign Legion vie in being the foremost, and Massamba is the lion of the Senegalese —that cannot be denied, for right is right. But it's too bad, anyhow. Sall held a fine hand, but did not know how to play his cards. Just on account of drinking and nasty habits. But of course one could hardly expect anything better from him. Sall, poor fellow, was of an inferior type; goodness knows whether he had been anything but a mere roustabout in Senegal; he was not well connected, had no family of any account, and under such circumstances one cannot rise to any height. «*Noblesse oblige,*» as they say in

Digitized by Google

French, but to understand that requires a certain amount of culture.

The interpreter squirmed around awhile before I could ask him directly about Sall. Why, yes, he drank quite a bit—he had gotten to be a regular soak toward the last; coarse and brutal as well. He would steal the wine rations whenever he had a chance. Fought and carried on worse than a Bolshevik—if he wasn't lying dead drunk in the ditch. The other day he had been put in irons; he had attacked a sergeant, beaten him up something terrible. And just imagine—Sall was within an ace of being appointed sergeant! Now that was, of course, out of the question, though he had the medal for gallantry, with two citations. For during the fight he was always sober; he was always in the lead, ahead of them all. He fought with knife and hand grenades, howled like a wild beast, was always the first to go over the top, pushed himself like a tank through the German trenches, yelled and stabbed, struck and ripped open, crushed limbs with his bare hands. He was never wounded; he walked as if protected by armor plate. But no sooner was the attack over when he became groggy again, worse than ever. And if the troop was *en repos* between battles, Sall went completely to pieces.

I sat and listened to the Negro interpreter with the

Digitized by Google

loud tie and wished that he would leave. Finally this dawned upon him, and he bowed ceremoniously and thanked me for the drinks. He was at every turn a perfect gentleman. I must not think that *he* would say anything bad about Sall. Far from it! Sall was really a splendid fellow—and strong. But, as his captain used to say, «he must have been bitten by a snake down there in Senegal. He has poison in his blood since he got back.»

I sent two or three letters to Sall that week. But there came no answer.

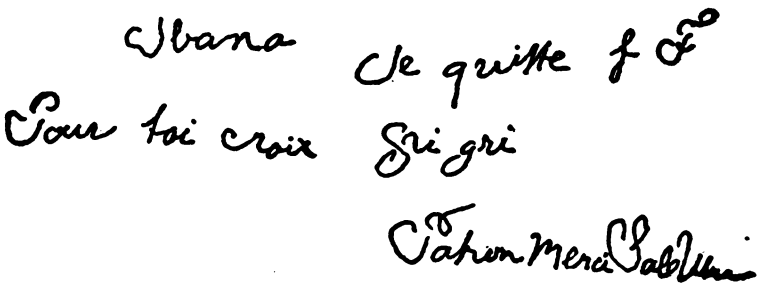
About a month later I was summoned to the War Office. In the room to which I was shown sat a dried-up individual in an obscure room back of a mountain of envelopes and bundles of paper. He examined my identification papers, had me write my name in a register, whereupon he rudely flung over on the desk before which I stood a small parcel. «*Voilà! votre affaire!*» he wheezed at me, and was again buried in his pile of envelopes. I opened the package. There was a medal—the French war cross with star and palm. And on top of the cross was my card and a crumpled scrap of paper, pinned together with a rusty needle. I looked at the paper, still puzzled; I bowed to the man behind the papers and asked for an explanation. He gave me an ugly look. «It was sent us yesterday from the headquarters of the 4th Army.

Digitized by Google

C'est tout! I presume you know your own connections. Good day, sir!»

When I got to my room I looked closer at the slip of paper. It was curled and spotted, a leaf from a notebook, handled by dirty hands, fingerprints all over the paper. It looked as if it had lain in the rain, blown about on clayey soil. There were spots of red on it.

The writing was like a child's, clumsy and unsteady. It was written with a lead pencil and almost illegible. Through a magnifying glass it looked thus:



As interpreted: «Ibana! I leave f. F. For you the cross. Gri-gri. Patron, thanks! Sall Uh——.»

I have tried to find out the meaning of *Ibana*. Also of *Gri-gri*. I have been told that they are all words from a negro dialect near Dakar in Senegal. *Ibana* means «all finished.» *Gri-gri* is supposed to denote a certain kind of amulet (a black piece of cloth em-

Digitized by Google

broidered with red dots) which the Ouolof negroes carry.

And now only a few lines in closing.

During the first days of November, just before the Armistice, I had been permitted to accompany the army of General Gouraud during its last combats in Champagne and the advance toward the frontier of Luxembourg. The Germans still held their ground tenaciously, but victory had definitely alighted on the French banners and every day we went forward.

It was on an evening up by Tahure. We were moving slowly back in the direction of Châlons, in order to take the train from there northward to Lille and Belgium. But first we wanted to have a glance at the battlefields around Châlons, those bloody plains, which time and again during a thousand years had seen hostile invasions halted, their force spent—and now history had repeated itself.

Forward on the horizon as the farthest outpost are the limestone hills around Butte Talma. For four years they have been fighting there, with senseless fury. Talure is the key to the Champagne line. On its slope every square foot is stained with blood. And the top of it is bare of soil. Millions upon millions of shells have not only stripped it clean, burnt off the «flesh» of rich mold covering it, but the structure itself, the «skeleton,» has been broken. The whole

Digitized by Google

plateau is nine meters lower today than it was four years ago. The limestone is smashed into powder, dust.

We reached the top at dusk. In the moonlight it looked like a waste of snow and frost. All life was banished from the surface of the ground. Nothing but death and silence remained. Even the crows kept away. There are many cemeteries along the front in France, from Nieuport in the north to the Swiss frontier in the south. But none is larger or more terrible than the one at Tahure. There they died by the tens of thousands. But only a fraction of them are resting in graves. The rest were blown to dust and powder.

I went inside the barbed-wire inclosure at the top. Between two shattered cannon, a half-burnt automobile, and the remains of a «tank» a barbed-wire fence was fixed up. Inside of it were a couple of hundred graves on which were planted plain wooden crosses. They had been placed there recently; the roughly planed pine strips still shone white in the moonlight. It was only a handful of the last ones recovered who were buried here—of the thousands who fell when General Gouraud *had* to and *did* take the heights of Tahure. A handful—for all around there was nothing but cemetery, mound after mound, grave after grave, German as well as French. The names and

Digitized by Google

numbers of the soldiers were inscribed on the plates. They all had fallen in October. Their packs and rifles were still lying on the graves.

I walked between the graves, bent now and then to read a name. There were many queer names, and in the darkness it was hard to read them.

I think it was the very last grave. It lay over in the corner, in the shelter of a gun-carriage. *Sall Uhu Massamba,* was the inscription on the plank, *4th Colonial Regiment, 25th Company, Senegal.* And four words more.

I felt cold chills. The captain called to me from the road. The automobiles were waiting. We still had far to go that evening. I looked about me. Now the stars were lighting up the sky. Round about a frosty plain. There were no flowers. I took a small gray rock and placed it on his grave. Stood there a while, called him by name. «Sall Uhu Massamba. *Mort pour la France.*»

Digitized by Google

The Eagle's Nest

He who dies, before he dies,
dies not, when he dies.

IN THE churchyard over by Faavang in Gudbrandsdalen, they dug up last fall a moss-covered stone slab, bearing that inscription. Nothing else.

Now they are trying to guess who might have been buried under that stone, and what was his fate in life.

But I had heard exactly these same words before. It was down in Rome in May. Then also were they mentioned in connection with Gudbrandsdalen. Therefore it startled me a little when I saw the words again.

It was on Sunday, May 13th. We came from the Italian headquarters at Udine and were bound for the Alps several miles inside Austrian territory. The Italians were in occupation. It was spring and sunshine, and the Italian troops were confident of victory. Along the whole front they were far inside the enemy's territory, and had no thought of any retreat. That was probably the last thing they would imagine.

On this May morning there was a festive air about

Digitized by Google

the military encampment at Tolmezzo, the enormous depot of army supplies, near the meeting of the rivers Tagliamento and Pella, forty kilometers north of Udine. (Sunday—Officers in uniform showed us around the establishment, which contained the principal stores for the Second Italian Army. They are, perhaps, of little interest to anybody, but here are a few figures which I had noted down: 2,000 head of cattle were always in the stables, 110 were butchered every day and forwarded to the army, 12,000 loaves of bread were baked per day. There were 40,000 pairs of boots in the storerooms, 100,000 pairs of socks, etc. The camp was like a fair-sized town. In June, 1915, there was not a building, not a shed—nothing, said the colonel, who took us around. Everything was built from the ground up in less than two years. He was visibly proud of his work. And rightly so. The whole was so practical, well kept, and neat, that one might imagine oneself over in America. Before the war Italy did not have the reputation of being a model country in matters of organization and cleanliness.

We continued upward along the river Pella. The valley became narrower, the mountains rose higher. It would be difficult to find two localities more closely resembling each other than Tolmezzo and Otta in Gudbrandsdalen. The same double river channels, one larger, one smaller, the same rock formations—

Digitized by Google

even the counterpart of the «Prillarguri» peak was in its place in the Italian landscape. Our automobiles turned to the right and it seemed like the Laagen Valley; but here the difference at once increased: The Pella Valley is narrower, the river smaller and more turbulent; the mountains more precipitously steep and peaked. Our road led straight into the heart of the Julian Alps. Colonel Barbarich of the headquarter's press bureau had promised to show us mountain warfare. It showed up pretty well already, though the front line was twenty-five kilometers away.

We had a hurried breakfast at general headquarters near Moggio. I have no other abiding recollection of the occasion than the faces of the general and his chief of staff. The general was short and round, smiling and talkative. How the old fellow enjoyed talking! His conversation rumbled like a torrent down at the end of the table, for the general was by no means a teetotaler. At his right sat the chief of staff, young, thin, stern, his face lined. He had a milk bottle in front of him, and scarcely uttered a word during the meal. But his steel-gray eyes were hard as flint. It was not the first time I had noticed such a combination. It recurs both in France and Italy. At the side of a chattering, elderly general sits a taciturn chief of staff, with a milk bottle and a pair of hard steel-gray eyes.

Digitized by Google

Still higher up the mountains. Past the last jammed-in village, Chiusaforte—a genuine Tyrolean landscape with the houses in clusters about the little church, from which now streamed the peasants of the neighborhood and soldiers on leave over Sunday. And down the steep slope hang the mountain streams like silver threads in the sun. The *Taunitzer See* ——? The name comes to my lips again and again. Indeed, for that matter, it might have been right here, up there on the hill, the peasant's cottage, where Irene and Professor Rubek sat Saturday evenings and let their birds swim in the brook. The water lilies and the burdock leaf, which became the boat of Lohengrin with the swan in front. Then into this narrow pass, through which the foaming glacier stream Raccolana has bored its way. At intervals it disappears completely beneath rocks big as houses, which have been torn loose, or it vanishes under bridges of ice, cemented together by avalanches on both sides. The road becomes narrower as we ascend, but here as everywhere on the Italian front, it is in excellent condition. One of the most difficult problems of the Italians during the first two years of the war was the building of new roads along the mountain-sides, up to hundreds of points absolutely inaccessible before the war. A whole army was set apart as road-builders, and the Italian officers took pride in pointing to the

Digitized by Google

1,800 kilometers of new highways that the war had obtained for these wild regions along the Austrian frontier. It was important to reach the highest points and fortify them before the Austrians got there. For they, too, worked on their side. Those who arrived first with their cannon and machine-guns dominated the opponent, blocked his way, and hindered his observation. There was a wild race for the top. It might take three months to get a heavy gun carried one kilometer forward, but at the same time it would be hoisted 2,000 to 3,000 meters upward.

Our automobile crawls up the road, which winds in zigzag fashion along the mountain-side. I find in my notebook a profile of the road; it looks like a series of W's lying horizontally and piled one on top of the other. It rises, rises continuously, cut into the solid rock. The first engineers that went up had their pockets full of small white pebbles, which they left to show the others the places where they could hoist themselves up. When we approach the turns, we seem to be headed straight into the mountain, or over a bottomless abyss. It is best not to attempt such a trip if one is subject to dizziness, at least not by automobile. The wheels run clear to the edge of the precipice; as we sit in the car, looking out over the «open» side, it seems like floating in an airplane; on the outer side is nothing but air. Throw a cigarette

Digitized by Google

and it falls five minutes before it comes to a stop. One prefers to talk to one's companion on the left. Unless one prefers to take a nap—while awake. Our friend the Dutchman tied a handkerchief over his eyes and ceased talking.

In one place the wheels of our car just spun around without advancing—then the car began to roll backward. We understood the situation when the chauffeur —and he was not a weakling—gave a shout and threw himself forward. Somehow we got out of the car. Fortunately, a crowd of little boys were occupied in crushing rock on the road just below us. I have never seen boys act so quickly; in a second they were holding on to the automobile like hornets, without being asked or ordered. They threw their sledges instantly, as though they had expected that just at that moment the automobile would roll backward. They knew what sort of road it was. We started walking up to Strattio.

Strattio was a little shelf in the mountain, a platform where the road widened and then made a loop. It was a rest station on the way up toward the peak. There were a couple of sheds with stores of provisions and other supplies, a distributing point, with a couple of hundred soldiers under the command of a captain. At this place I made the following note—I cite verbatim:

«We are in the narrowest pass between Monte Baba

Digitized by Google

and Sella di Nevea. Plowed through yard-deep drifts of snow. Mountain-sides perpendicular. Avalanches have fallen. Wonderful views. We see here only snow-covered plains, gray stone walls, and a panel of blue sky. The mountain streams hang suspended like white sheets. Mule paths. Snow tunnels. *Teleferica* on a ledge above a dizzy precipice. The Austrians only four kilometers distant. Cannon-shots above our heads.»

Teleferica—that's what the Italians call the electric transport cable. We had heard a good deal about this latest method of transportation on the Italian front, and here we had occasion to see and try it ourselves. It is used for the transportation of both men and supplies. On this plateau was a power station for such an electric air line. A sixty-h.p. motor operated the double steel cable which ran up and down to the farthest outpost two and a half kilometers forward and about 900 meters higher up. That was our destination. «If you please, gentlemen ——» The *teleferica* is at our service.

It might be tempting to tell a little more in detail about our experiences during the next hour. But it is the event up at the «Eagle's Nest» which is to be the subject of this narrative, and therefore, everything else must be made as brief as possible. I can only refer to the lively debate which took place among us

Digitized by Google

up there on the «shelf,» as to the advisability of intrusting ourselves to the *teleferica*, a discussion which ended by two of our journalist colleagues flatly refusing to step inside the «coffin,» as they called it—the bed-shaped, low box which served as «carriage» during the passage through the air. «No, rather would they allow themselves to be pulled by the hair up the bare mountain-side! They had signed no contract to intrust their young lives to a slender wire slung over Italian precipices!» And so forth. In short, three of us and our accompanying lieutenant were, in two trips, dispatched as parcels up to Outpost No. 17 on Monte Cregnedul. Our two colleagues were to wait for us, until the next day, on the ledge by the motor shed. The captain at that place was more than pleased to get company at the mess table that night.

Neither shall I try to describe our own air trip. Let it suffice to say that it was a pretty ticklish sensation—lying flat on the open board bench—to be dragged along at a snail's pace over abysses where several Eiffel towers might be placed end to end without reaching up to us. I have been in an airplane a few times. It was paradise compared with lying tied up in an Italian *teleferica*. We got bird's-eye views of sunny, snow-white mountain peaks. But I regretted the somewhat offensive remarks I had made to the Dutchman when he tied the handkerchief over his

Digitized by Google

eyes. However, we reached our destination at last. And the garrison of the «Eagle's Nest»—oh, yes; «*il nido dell'acquila*» was the name which the garrison of Post No. 17 had given their station. And it was characteristic enough.

We are at an elevation of 2,437 meters. Above us mountain still rises, perpendicular; here there is a little pucker, and on this ledge, about three or four meters wide, the post has been installed. The first rope by which the *teleferica* wire was later hauled up had been brought there by an airplane. With a thin cord, a kilometer long, dragging behind him, the flyer again and again tried to pitch the ball of twine on to the platform, and the five or six men who after a long struggle had reached the place kept pulling miles and miles of cords of increasing thickness on to the ledge, until finally, with the help of more men who had come up, they were able to pull in the steel cables. A small troop of thirty men are permanently stationed up there. A field-gun and two machine-guns are placed on the ledge itself, brought up in sections by means of the *teleferica*. But above us, we are told, four hundred to five hundred meters higher, in the midst of the snow, are also a cannon and some machine-guns. For up there is the real outpost.

And there they can see the Austrians face to face, while the «Eagle's Nest» looks more toward the south-

Digitized by Google

west and is fortified rather against the chance that a hostile advance down in the valley should succeed in spite of all resistance. We note also that a narrow footpath cut out of the solid rock creeps along from the «Eagle's Nest» around the cliff to the left. This leads up to the snow and the top. Along this path the watches come and go, being relieved every three hours up by the cannon and machine-guns.

We are received by a young, dapper lieutenant in the uniform of Alpine chasseurs, who invites us in. And now we discover a wide and deep cave inside the ledge itself. There is a natural cavity within the rock, a vaulted cellar under the projecting crag. And there in the semi-darkness this handful of chasseurs have built their wooden barracks. The lieutenant's «den» is on the right, five soldiers' compartments in a row on the left. There has been a roasting-hot sun all day and the snow has melted; a regular cascade is rushing over the crag and down on our heads as we step over on the ledge. We do not wait for a second invitation to seek shelter in the lieutenant's «*salon*» against this «Niagara Falls» which our colleague from Central America at once named it.

Soon we are seated on benches in the lieutenant's hut. It is so dark in there under the crag that the light —two kerosene lamps—is lighted at once, though it is early in the afternoon. Something—perhaps it was

Digitized by Google

the lamplight—put us at once in good humor and gave us all a feeling of coziness and of being at home. The hut itself was as alluring and comfortable as could be. I felt as if I were at home again in an old beloved hunting-cabin away up in the mountains of Norway. There along the wall are the bunks; the fireplace is over in the corner; the strong, substantial pine table in the center of the floor, the homemade log chairs, shelves and cupboards on the wall, the latter covered with canvas and adorned by countless newspaper cuts and war pictures. A series of illustrated post cards from Naples and Rome was also tacked on the walls, and a cluster of pine cones; a few queer, red alpine flowers finished the decoration. I noticed that all the post cards were addressed to our host—Sottotenente Giovanni di R ——, although the furniture and other equipment in the hut indicated that it was inhabited by two. And this host of ours, who sat between us and tried in a wonderful mixture of French and Italian to satisfy our curiosity and to find a reply to every possible and impossible question addressed to him, was the greatest satisfaction of all. He became at once to every one of us like an old friend. He must be an ideal companion up here in the mountains. Cheerful, jovial, strong, and tanned by years of living in the open air amid snow and sunshine. And his joyous laughter and bright smile should be the best doctor for

Digitized by Google

all his «boys,» if loneliness and the endless war once in a while threatened to get the better of them. Oh no, Sottotenente Giovanni would not be smitted by the *cafard*! «Let the war last another four years, for all of me! I am doing fine, where I am!» He was twenty-six years of age, engineer by profession, born and raised in Naples, where before the war he was in the employ of the street railway company.

He had just been informed that a ten days' leave had been granted him. He had not, himself, asked for any furlough. «But I suppose I had better take it,» said he, «or I may be arrested for insubordination»!

However, there was a good deal to see outside the tent also, and it was important to make use of the two or three hours of daylight still left us. It had been quickly decided that we four strangers should spend the night in the lieutenant's hut, and ever since our departure from Udine it was assumed that in some way or other we would get the taste of a night in camp up among the mountains, the elevation and other conditions to be determined by ourselves. «Every one of my officers' diggings are open to you,» was the telephone message which the office accompanying us had received from the general in command of the division. And with this warrant in our pocket we had no hesitation in accepting 'Tenente Giovanni's matter-of-course and cordial invitation to «share bed-

Digitized by Google

ding» with him that night. Beds would be made up on the floor, and they would manage to find something to eat and drink, too.

We went out, talked with the soldiers, inspected their barracks inside the cave, visited the stores of hand-grenades, air torpedoes, and every sort of ammunition for the cannon, machine-guns, and rifles. Surely the «Eagle's Nest» was well provided! It would not be easy or safe for a thief to get near it.

The chill of evening was already upon us; we noticed that we were high up in the air. The trickling stream from the cliff in front of the cave had stiffened; it was forming a panoply of jagged, sharp points, like bayonets, which lengthened and gradually descended in front of the entrance to the cave. It formed a curtain which no scene-painter could improve upon.

Of course we wanted to get up to the very top and take a look at the Austrians at close range. After giving us some good advice—unfortunately, he could not himself accompany us, having to do some signaling with the camp below—the lieutenant sent four men along to pilot us up to the gun-stand at the summit. «You will find Lieutenant B —— up there,» he called after us, as in single file we started up the path which winds around the projection at the left.

Hardly were we back of the rock which shut off

Digitized by Google

the view of the «Eagle's Nest,» when we were right in the midst of the snow. And here we discovered a shed, a large snow-covered sentry-box, inside of which were a couple of dozen skis and snowshoes. The soldiers recommended that we put on skis, although the ascent might in a pinch be made without them; a sort of footpath had been trampled along the ski tracks. But it was not pleasant to risk crossing the deep ice spans on foot, while to me as an old ski-runner it would have been fun to put them on once more. A couple of cannon-shots popped from the Austrian side just as we stopped in front of the sentry-box. The soldiers advised us to be careful and to go up in «scattered formation,» and thus I had an excuse to part company and, start off for the top with a ski-running soldier. The Central-American and the Portuguese were still debating in front of the sentry-box when we started. They could not agree on the proper way of tying the skis—fastening the «harness,» as they called it. They caught up with us at the top three-quarters of an hour later. They both came tramping. «The d —— boards were glazed on the under side!» complained the Portuguese.

As soon as I reached the stone fence at the top I had my first surprise. We had left our skis about a hundred yards below, and came sneaking up to the stone wall which formed a butt against the Austrian

Digitized by Google

position, which we supposed lay on the peak opposite, but a little lower than the Italian.

A little to the rear on the right wing we saw the cannon, hidden between huge boulders. Immediately on this side of it was a «fort» cleverly built up with sandbags. The soldiers informed us that it was one of the machine-guns. We proceeded toward a similar structure, where machine-gun No. 2 had been installed. In the distance we observed some white-robed figures, moving in crouching posture behind the stone bulwark or half reclining against it. They were the men on guard—*alpini in vedetta.* They wore white covers over their uniforms, in order to make the least possible contrast with the snow and the white surroundings. It was uncanny to see these ghost-like figures moving about the machine-guns, like Pierrots in a graveyard. «There is Lieutenant Egidio,» (the name is changed), whispered the soldier accompanying me, and pointed to one of the white-robed figures back of the fence. «Do you know him?» he added, and I seemed to sense anxiety and fear in his voice.

I crawled up back of the lieutenant and addressed him as well as I could in my broken Italian. He was looking intently toward the Austrian position, a rifle beside him in the loophole. He turned his head slowly toward me and brought his hand up to a salute. But

Digitized by Google

He was looking intently toward the Austrian position, a rifle beside him in the loophole.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

not a word came from his lips. As I caught sight of his face, a shock went through me—that man is mad!

A few years ago in Christiania there was a street-car conductor who suddenly cut the throats of his wife and three children. He went from the street-car to his home near Grünerlokken, killed his family, quietly sat down to the dinner table and cut bread with the knife used for the murder. I arrived there as reporter, together with the police. The man still sat by the table, the corpses lying around him. He was perfectly unruffled. «Well, now they have found peace,» said he, pointing to his victims. And here was the same kind of face as that murderer's, hard, impassive, stiffened into a mask of infinite sadness; the same kind of eyes, wide open, distant, which gazed at me with a fixed look out of the semi-darkness under the canvas roof. My heart suddenly started thumping violently. I stammered a few words, commonplace remarks about the war and the hardships of the service up here in the snow. He lay there and looked at me all the time I talked. He nodded now and then, but his voice I did not hear. His features, however, were not unpleasant to look at; he must have been a brave and gallant young fellow; smooth-shaven, rather below than above thirty. I can still see his heavy, dark eyebrows, strong, curved nose, a shock of black, curly hair, contrasting sharply with the white linen cap

Digitized by Google

which he had pulled over his head. It was only the expression of his eyes and the helpless, hopeless, strained look on his face, which disturbed me, and the fact that he did not utter a word. The idea that he might be mute by nature, organically incapable of speech, never occurred to me. I knew that the man *could* speak, had spoken. Only that the words somehow were entirely lost. Now and then he seemed to be about to say something, as if endeavoring to force an utterance. But nothing came of it. He looked like a man just awakened from a swoon, to whom consciousness has not yet returned from the regions of darkness; the thoughts are still blurred; there is a mere twitching of the lips, an intimation of speech, and then the helpless falling back on the pillows.

The two soldiers beside him saved the situation for me—for both of us perhaps. For I got the impression that our fruitless tête-à-tête was as painful to the lieutenant as it was to me. For the distressed look on his face had become even more pronounced. It was as if he wanted to beg pardon for his silence. But his eyes, large and fascinating, still rested on me. What was his mind searching for?—or could he center the current of his thoughts on anything? It was only when the soldiers interfered and began to point and to explain to me, that the lieutenant also turned toward the stone wall again. His field-glass hung in a strap

Digitized by Google

around his neck; he raised it and directed it toward the Austrian position on the rock opposite. He remained lying thus. When my colleagues came up I cautioned them by a few words in English. For that matter, he apparently paid no attention to them, either. But he saluted them as they came near. And then the soldiers took charge and showed us around. But none of them referred to the lieutenant by word, gesture, or allusion whatever. When in his vicinity, they seemed to speak in more subdued tones and more cautiously. And they paid him due honor as to a superior—with almost conspicuous formality.

We stood stooping behind the stone wall and looked through the loopholes down over the landscape. And what scenery! The wildest peaks of the Alps, an endless panorama of gorges and abysses. The Jotunheim seemed a mere approach to this. Snow-fields and glaciers squeezed in between smooth-worn cliffs; cupolas and towers, keen-edged pinnacles, bottomless pits. We were at the summit of Monte Canin, 2,592 meters up. Directly facing us was the Austrian position on Rombon (2,208 m.); forward to the right the ice-crowned mass of Manhart, clouds hovering about its top (2,678 m.), which seemed to vanish in the sky. I stood thinking about Flanders and the plains of Champagne, the marshes of the Somme, and the sandbanks at Nieuport, two thousand kilometers

Digitized by Google

distant. Landscapes as different as one could imagine them to be, panoramas which have nothing in common except that they are all part of the setting of the same drama; for the war in itself is everywhere the same, like unto itself—the infamy of humanity, the negation of natural emotion. Suddenly a bullet hissed past, above our heads, then another, and again another; a hail-storm of bullets beat against the stone wall, sand spurted out of the bags on top of the parapet. We dropped down flat inside the wall. «*They* have seen us,» said the soldiers; our dark clothes must have betrayed us. We had barely caught a glimpse of the Austrian line in the snow along the mountain-side; it was dimly outlined like a dirty woolen thread against a white sheet of paper. There was a gap of eight hundred meters across the canyon between it and us. But the guard had apparently noticed that something unusual was taking place, and so they sent us a «blast» to warn us that they were on the alert. The bullets pinged pretty lively for a while, then the firing stopped as abruptly as it had begun.

An hour later we again sat in Lieutenant Giovanni's cabin. The table was set as if for a regular banquet, and yet he made excuses, saying that it would be only *à la fortune du pot*. We were hungry as wolves and did abundant justice to both food and drink. And our spirits rose in the *canja* as the dark-

Digitized by Google

ness descended outside. I could not help, however, thinking about that strange, silent man whom we had left up above, behind the stone barrier in the snow. Again and again his image rose before me—the staring eyes, the drawn lips. Did he suffer from an incurable ailment, was he really mad, or was it merely an ordinary, perhaps temporary, case of aphasia, loss of memory? But at any rate, how could he remain at his post? How could he perform the duties of the service; he would surely have to give orders once in a while? I hesitated to ask Giovanni about his companion, and it was one of the other men who first raised the question of the «sphinx.» «Say, what is really the matter with your colleague? Is he mute or crazy?» Lieutenant Giovanni was evidently prepared to meet the question. It surprised him not at all; the merry, bright smile did not for a moment leave his face, and it may be that I merely imagined an undertone of concern, of tender sympathy, in his voice, when he answered almost jokingly, as he seized his glass: «Ah, Egidio—*mais pas du tout!* Neither the one nor the other! He is rather *silencieux*, perhaps, but he does speak—a little—oh, a few words—every two or three weeks, anyway! And, too, *c'est un très brave garçon, vous savez. Très, très brave.*» That was all we learned. Lieutenant Giovanni had so much else to talk about.

Digitized by Google

Just as we finish our supper in come Egidio himself. An oppressive stillness follows his entrance. He bows formally to each one of us and takes his place at the table. Giovanni does not even try to speak to him, much less any of the rest of us, of course. But I notice that Giovanni is very attentive to him, gives the soldiers serving the table orders concerning the warm dishes to be brought in for him, another bottle of wine, etc. When Egidio has finished his meal, Giovanni finds a wrap for him, a sort of long, lined dressing-gown, and helps him put it on. He gives him tobacco from his own pouch. All this without the exchange of a word between them, but discreetly, as if a matter of course on the part of Giovanni, while he keeps on chatting with us, telling us one experience after the other, now of the soldier's life up here on the mountain, now of Sicily and Rome. Egidio has retired to the darkest corner of the room; there he sits for a while, pulling at his pipe, which soon goes out, and he does not light it again. I catch a glimpse of his eyes in the semi-darkness over in the corner; they look larger and crazier than before. They seem to emit rays at us—at each of us in succession—phosphorescent, unpleasant flashes, which vanish, move, at the same moment that our own vision meets them. Giovanni is telling about the transport of

Digitized by Google

corpses by the *teleferica*; four or five times soldiers have been killed at the post up on the mountain; a bomb tore three men to pieces one day; others fell by bullets or machine-gun fire. The bodies are carried down to the *teleferica*, which conveys them farther. Somewhere down in the valley we had driven past the military cemetery, where all who perish in the mountains are buried. It is worse when the wounded have to be brought down by this method. Many of them are afraid and resist; then they are bound fast to the «car» and a guard is placed over them. They *must* be taken down and there is no other means of transportation.

It is getting late, and we begin to settle ourselves for the night here in the hut. Suddenly Egidio gets up and again puts on his camp clothes. For the first time Giovanni asks him a question and Egidio nods affirmatively; he is going up to the post again! Giovanni does not protest. They have both spent many a night there. The instructions are to the effect that one of them must always be at the post. Six men are continually on guard up there, in turn. And now something happens which I do not comprehend at all: Egidio is standing in the middle of the floor, with his sheepskin coat tightly buttoned, ready to leave. He advances two steps toward me, and asks:

Digitized by Google

«*Conosce lei Lillehammer?*» His voice is strangely soft and pleasant, but it seems to come from far, far in the distance. And before I fully grasp the meaning of his question he nods, as if himself confirming it:

«*Le collezioni di Sandvig non mi sono ignote. Maihaug, non è vero ——? Come è bello!*»

This rattled me for a moment. I frankly admit it. This strange man—this crazy person facing me, how did he know that *I* came from Lillehammer? How could *he* talk to me about the collections in my *own* town—about Maihaugen, which I know in and out as well as my own pockets? And that here in the midst of the Italian Alps! I was completely puzzled. It is possible that once since my arrival we had mentioned Norway. It is possible, but I am not sure of it. But even if we had—how could he cut right through and come to *me* about Lillehammer? And then, the assurance with which he spoke! There wasn't a shade of a doubt in his mind that I knew Lillehammer. He did not even wait for my answer to his question. And when I finally managed to blurt out that of course I knew Lillehammer, my own city, he wasn't the least surprised! He knew it! But how in the world —— Had he himself ever been at Lillehammer? He nodded affirmatively. And then, in a low and trembling voice, more to himself than to me, «*Ma è molto*

Digitized by Google

tempo, molto tempo fa» («But it is long ago, a very long time ago»)! And then he went—opened the door and disappeared. And we saw him no more.

A fortnight later I was in Rome, and met there by appointment—Lieutenant Giovanni. He was then on his return from Naples at the expiration of his furlough and on his way to the mountains again. But he had arranged for a few days' stop-over in Rome, and we spent much of this time together. He knew Rome on his finger tips, and took me around to many of the sights.

One evening as we were strolling about on the Campagna I spoke to him about Egidio. He had never mentioned his name again. But I had happened to remember one thing: at the Italian headquarters in Udine I had, on one of the first days of my visit to the front, met the Italian painter Maurizio Barricelli, who some years ago had lived in Christiania—he had married a Norwegian lady—and whom I had seen there. At Udine we had spent an evening together. He served with the rank of captain, as orderly officer, I believe, at any rate he was frequently at the front, clear out at the front lines. Perhaps *he* had by chance met Lieutenant Egidio and had mentioned my name and the place where I came from, etc. But, no, neither

Digitized by Google

Giovanni nor Egidio had any knowledge of Captain Barricelli. In fact, for many weeks, perhaps for months before our visit, there had been no strangers at the «Eagle's Nest.» And the two officers had not been absent from their post since they went there at the beginning of the war, except Egidio, *only once*, during Christmas, 1916. And then, that evening, as we strolled among the tombs on the Campagna, I got a glimpse of what had happened to Giovanni's companion. I am telling it briefly and without embellishment: Before the war Egidio had been a lawyer in Rome; he belonged to one of the city's best families, had a fine mind, was a man with a brilliant future, was sought after and made much of by the highest circles of society. The ladies swarmed about him, for he was a gallant and handsome fellow, a man of intelligence, and his wealth was another attraction. He became engaged to the daughter of an ambassador at Rome, and with her and her parents he made a trip to Norway in 1914. They had gone through all of Gudbrandsdalen. The young people were to have been married in May, 1915. On the 24th of May, three days before the wedding, Italy entered the war, and Egidio, as an officer liable to military service, was immediately sent to the front. The wedding was postponed, and we know nothing of what happened

Digitized by Google

until Christmas, 1916. On his first furlough Egidio went to Rome. He had looked forward to it with joyous anticipation, said Giovanni. Four days later —he had four days left of his furlough—he returned to the «Eagle's Nest.» «Then he was no longer alive.» From that day he did not speak. Not until long after, through strangers, did Giovanni learn that the ambassador's daughter was married. On the day after Christmas, 1916, she had married an artist, a violinist, and Giovanni mentioned a man well known throughout Europe, whose name I had seen last year a couple of times on concert programs and in newspapers even in Christiania. It was a trivial story—as it happens in Norway, in Italy, and everywhere, every day and every year. Who cares about it! But Egidio remained standing silent in the snow back of the stone wall at the top of Monte Canin. «He is waiting for the Austrians,» said Giovanni. «*Dopo la morte dell' anima, la morte stessa e nulla,*» he added. I know no better translation of this than the inscription on the tombstone up there in Faavang:

> He who dies, before he dies,
> Dies not, when he dies.

A week ago I received a card from Italy. It gave neither the place nor the date of writing, but was stamped Verona, November 13th, 1917. It bore the

Digitized by Google

following message: «Egidio killed the 24th of October ‹di fronte al nemico›—facing the enemy. He fell at his post behind the stone parapet at the top, valiant and silent. Long live Italy!—Magnificamente, *silenziosamente*. Evviva l'Italia!» Signed *Giovanni*.

Digitized by Google

The Chameleon

A MAN may have a double. As a rule, when we say that, we have two persons in mind. I have thought a little about this matter. I believe that a man may be his own double. It is my friend the Japanese, Kinzo Yuratoku—no titles—who most definitely has given me this belief. Some time ago I saw his name in an American paper. It was in a tragic connection, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald.* It was the sight of his name there which gave me the courage to tell something about my encounters with him during the war. And let each one make up his own belief in the matter. But *I* believe that a man may have another ego, even more.

The first time I met him was a day in spring, 1916, on a military train leaving for the front. We were four journalists who had received the War Department's permission to go out to that inferno of battle around Verdun. Of the two other colleagues I have no clear recollection; one was American, the other Italian, pleasant, likeable men. I have not seen them since. And Major de Garnay, that splendid warrior

Digitized by Google

from the 2nd Bureau of the War Department, was detailed as leader of the tour. Then there was the fifth man in the party, the Japanese. A first-class compartment had been reserved for us at the Gare de l'Est in Paris. To be perfectly honest, I am sure that it was on account of the Japanese that both Major de Garnay and my two colleagues left the compartment and preferred to remain outside in the corridor, the adjoining compartment, or the dining-car. His looks were not in his favor, and he smelled bad. He was, to speak plainly, ugly, and sat with a fixed idiotic smile on his crooked, yellow, wrinkled face. He wore also a pair of enormous green tortoise-shell glasses—the Americans in France had just launched this style. On the Japanese they looked ridiculous and unnatural. Besides, his lenses were magnifying. You could never catch his eyes. They looked like lumps of jellyfish behind a glass cheese-cover.

I remained in the compartment and, chiefly from politeness or sympathy, addressed a few words to the Japanese. He responded; the smile became, if possible, broader and more idiotic, and he at once asked whether I preferred to speak English or French. I spoke both with equal lack of proficiency and replied to his slight superciliousness, saying that I certainly regretted not to be able to speak *his* language. He moved slightly closer to me and said in fairly clear

Digitized by Google

Norwegian, «*Jeg gjor i like maate for Deres sprog*» («I do in like manner for your language»). I looked into his glasses, but saw only a sea of opaque murkiness, without a single definite point on which to fasten my gaze. His eyes were like the Sargasso Sea, filled with driftwood and seaweed. He had pushed himself back into the upholstered corner of the seat, and his lower jaw hung a little less slack, so to speak, and his smile did not broaden any further. Then I closed in on him: Could he really speak Norwegian, and how did he know that I was a Norwegian? Ah, well—and now he spoke in easy and fluent French—at the War Department the day before he had come to know about his traveling companions of the next day, and in regard to Norwegian, he was somewhat interested in the different European languages, though he was far from speaking them *couramment*, unfortunately! Besides, he understood they had something they called «conflict of languages»—wasn't that it? And did the popular dialects have any chance of gaining the upper hand? He appreciated the problem from its national standpoint, and to that extent sympathized with the popular-language movement, but on the other hand, possibly the literary partnership with Denmark, etc. . . .

We were suddenly in the midst of a discussion of the Norwegian language controversy, and I had my

Digitized by Google

hands full trying to meet his arguments. He knew them all, on both sides. «Now, that man, Ivar Aasen—and *des contemporairs*, the famous Bosher, Johan—*la force du mensonge!* Aha! *The Power of a Lie!*—Johan *Bojer*! Yes, yes, of course!»—The Japanese had read three or four of Bojer's works in French translation. He was very enthusiastic about them—had not by far such high appreciation of Hamsun. If I—indeed, I must excuse his presumption—but if *par hasard* I had one of Bojer's books, I could not show him, my traveling companion, a greater honor, nor please him better than by lending him the volume for a short time. But in Norwegian, of course. Both for the sake of his study of the language, the Norwegian, as well as for the pleasure of the artistic contents of the book, would I be doing him, Kinzo Yuratoku, an extraordinary service by lending it to him? He had in vain looked for the Norwegian edition in many of the bookshops in Paris.

In view of my later experiences with him, I may state right here that soon after my return to Paris from the trip to the front I sent him a copy of Bojer's *The Power of a Lie* in Norwegian. I shall revert to the book again in the course of this narrative.

Something else happened in the compartment, which made me devote still more attention to the little Japanese. Perhaps many, even a large number, of his

Digitized by Google

countrymen are equally well-informed, but this is what happened: A little later he was reading *Le Matin.* There was a telegram from Bergen—one of the few telegrams from Norway that I saw in French newspapers during the war. Bergen had been ravaged by fire some time before, and now the brief telegram told that the damage was estimated at so and so many millions and that the shortage of houses was keenly felt in the fire-swept city. The Japanese read aloud to me the telegram, and then began to speak about Bergen. He told me a great deal about Bergen—about the thrifty city of our west country and its wonderful possibilities for success in the domains of commerce and shipping. It ought to become a world port for overseas traffic; it ought to secure control of the Iceland and Faroe Islands fishery, and become a European center of the canning industry. He had been informed that just at this time a commission of Japanese were on a tour of investigation along the west coast of Norway to familiarize themselves with methods of canning, handling of fish, and possibilities of export, principally to countries of the East. The exports of Bergen amounted to about 90 millions of kroner yearly. They might easily be quadrupled. The old, sound Bergen firms, Joh. C. Martens & Co., Herman v. Tangen's Sons, Waldemar Mohn & Son, Christian Mikkelsen, who was equally great as busi-

Digitized by Google

ness man and as statesman, etc. This Japanese heaped shame upon me, a Norwegian, whose knowledge of the metropolis of our west country, its exports and industry, was limited principally to what I had gathered on a couple of brief visits. He knew the extent of the fire, even the number of the blocks destroyed. He had never been in Norway, but as soon as the war was over he hoped—«*J'aime à voyager*» («I like traveling»), said he.

When the three other gentlemen came into the compartment the Japanese became silent. He grinned in friendly fashion, and suddenly lapsed into a remarkably broken French. He drew over himself a traveling-blanket and was soon snoring. But I got the impression that he slept with eyes open behind the lenses, over in his corner. During the rest of the tour I had little opportunity to talk with him. When the shrapnel fell thickest he wrote crouching. He had a large number of notebooks with him. At night he had a small electric flashlight with him in bed. His eyelids were red when we separated, a few days later, at the East Station in Paris. He bowed, like a young schoolboy, awkwardly but respectfully, to us, his colleagues, when the party was dissolved. «The nut!» said the American, shrugging his shoulders.

A week later. For one reason or another, I was in wretched humor, tired and worn, unable to work,

Digitized by Google

down and out. It happened once in a while that war weariness, *le cafard*, took hold of me in that fashion. Then there was only one thing to do—to walk, walk by the hour, until I almost dropped from weariness. I did the same that day, and at dark in the evening I came from the other side of Montmartre, strolling down the poor, crooked, steep alleys which lead down toward Boulevard de Clichy. There, on a corner in a slum district, where the traffic, however, was quite lively, I met him, almost collided with him, as we turned the corner from different directions. I recognized him at once, though he looked queer. He was ragged and dirty, dressed like a tramp. He wore a coat that was entirely too big for him and reached almost to his knees, a pair of lady's shoes so tattered that his toes stuck out. He looked wretched. Before him, held by a strap around his neck, he carried a trayful of cheap Japanese trinkets for sale. A beggar, therefore, one of the kind with which the streets of Paris are teeming—a cheap beggar, camouflaged as a street vender. To me the encounter was so sudden, so unexpected, that I could only stutter: «Hello, *monsieur! Bon jour, monsieur* ——» In my haste, I could not even recall his name. But he was quite calm, tipped his hat. «*Bon soir, Monsieur F. F.,*» speaking my full name. We exchanged a few remarks about the position at Verdun and our trip out there.

Digitized by Google

But I soon found that I had to hurry on, and we shook hands. «And a thousand thanks for Bojer's book,» said he. «It is a masterpiece, and it has keenly interested me.» «Keep it as long as you like,» I answered, and nodded to him amicably. He stood looking at me as I went. Goodness knows whether he had not intended to sell me one of his dolls or colored fans. But I shall not forget the bare toes sticking out of the gaps in his shoes. They were not pretty.

One day, it might have been three weeks later, there came to my lodging a written invitation to dine with him and some friends of his the following Saturday at eight o'clock. I paid little attention to the invitation, doubt if I even answered it. For some reason or other I had a notion that it was the case of an ordinary journalist spread, with poor food, *vin ordinaire*, and probably, at the end, a dividing up of the bill. It was not until Saturday evening, as I looked again at the invitation, that I noticed that the place of the gathering was Foyot. This restaurant is one of the finest and most exclusive in Paris, the evening rendezvous of Senators. I decided—after much hesitation—to wear a tuxedo, though, really, I should have preferred to go in my common, everyday sack coat—if I went at all. It would, of course, be only expensive and tiresome besides! I went wrong when I arrived at Foyot. I turned back a couple of times and inquired

Digitized by Google

in other parts of the establishment, but was forthwith sent back to the main entrance to the drawing-rooms on the second floor. Japanese in full-dress suits swarmed in the halls. The *vestiaire* wanted to take my hat and overcoat: «No,» I said. «I am here only to meet Monsieur Yuratoku and party.» «*Parfaitement, monsieur,*» replied the porter, and bowed again. *Prince Yuratoku—c'est ici!*»

I felt ill at ease that evening. I seemed to have come into an enchanted house. The next day it all seemed like a dream. And my readers will probably believe that my story is sheer fancy, a piece of my imagination. But upon my word, I was not drunk; on the contrary, all that evening I was very cautious in the matter of drinks, in fact I was a bit scared, timid—curious, too—and I kept saying to myself, «Look out!» What an experience it was! I believe that the grotesque, motley-colored, exotic decorations adorning every wall must have been sprayed with some poisonous or narcotic substance. And the cigarettes passed around at the table certainly contained opium. During the dinner I inadvertently put one in my pocket and later had this suspicion verified. And of course there was *hashish* which the gentlemen around the water-bottle on the floor smoked as they sipped their coffee over in the corner. The word *hashish* was on my lips at once as I saw them reclining, but I did

Digitized by Google

not venture to ask any more questions that evening. I had made so many queries already without getting a straight answer.

I asked a question just as I entered, and caught sight of the twenty or twenty-five gentlemen in full evening dress. They were all Japanese, every one with gold-rimmed spectacles. Even my friend, Kinzo Yuratoku, had for this occasion exchanged his horn-rimmed ones for a pair set in gold. Let it be said that this was the finest, most elegant gathering of men in civilian clothes that I have ever met on any festive occasion. And how provincial and out of place my poor tuxedo appeared among these men in dress coats, white ties, and patent-leather shoes; each and every one of whom might have come from the show windows of the fashionable tailors on the Avenue de l'Opéra. On their fingers and shirt fronts glittered rare, precious stones; but it struck me that none of the men carried any decorations. Everything was black and white, glimmer and gold. I said that the company consisted of Japanese only; but, no, there were present, besides myself, two Europeans. And let me say a few words about them. One of them was a tall, thin, keen-looking gentleman with an eagle's-beak nose and steel-gray eyes. A British type, splendid personality. I think I have seen a full-page picture of him in some English magazine, but can not remember

Digitized by Google

when and where. I can see his steel mask before me to this day. He might have been an admiral, a bandit chief—or the opposite. When I was introduced to him, he was called Monsieur X——, a quite common name of no particular significance. I inquired repeatedly during the evening who he was, but the replies were always evasive, meaningless—Monsieur Smith or Thompson, or whatever the name was. «*Un grand ami de notre pays*» («A good friend of our country»), was the usual answer. He himself was silent. And when a speech was made in his honor, he answered in three words—«*Thanks, my friends!*» He did not rise as he uttered them. But *he* was therefore the guest of honor. Our host, my friend Kinzo Yuratoku, had him on his right, at the center of the horseshoe table. I was placed two seats farther down, on the same side. An elderly, fat Japanese, who looked like an old woman, sat between Mr. Smith and me. He was the only one for whom the guests rose when he drank with them. He ate greedily, at times using his fingers. I tried to engage him in conversation, but he dismissed me with a grunt. Fortunately, I had on my right a charming and agreeable companion. The only language spoken at the table—with the exception of the speech which Kinzo Yuratoku gave in honor of Mr. Smith—was French. And as far as I could judge, a perfect, faultless French. When Yuratoku began

Digitized by Google

the series of speeches, it was with an apology to me for addressing a few words to Mr. Smith in *Japanese*! It was a long, eloquent address, of which I did not understand a word. But the whole company, even the «grandam» at my left, rose and toasted Mr. Smith. It was then that he smiled and said, «Thanks, my friends!» There were only three speeches—for Mr. Smith, for me, and —— But, really, I have forgotten to present the third European at the feast. He was a rotund, jovial, florid-looking gentleman fifty or fifty-five years old. He sat at the lower end of the table and made a terrible racket all evening. I heard his jokes and ringing laughter right along during the dinner. He was evidently the company's funny man, its *enfant terrible*, outspoken to everybody. In the little humorous speech for him, Yuratoku called him «our keeper of the keys,» the only English words in that speech. It made me no wiser than before. But I had quite soon given up any notion of getting to the bottom of the mystery with which I was surrounded. What did it signify, *i.e.*, that each and every one in addressing, or referring to, our host, always called him «*Monsieur le prince*»? But at the same time they seemed not to have much respect for him. They remained sitting when he drank with them, some even drank to him first. They cracked jokes with him, at times pretty coarse ones, and some of the younger

Digitized by Google

fellows slapped him jovially on the back and asked him for a «light.»

Kinzo had addressed a few kind words to me during the dessert, reminded me of the trip to the front, and heaped on a number of complimentary remarks about Norway. Soon after, I heard one of the guests drinking with him and referring to him as «*Prince des Ténèbres*» (Prince of Darkness)—who soon would be appointed «manager for Christiania and the northern waters.» The shadow of a grimace passed over Yuratoku's face, but he returned the toast, and smiled again, and I thought to myself that this evening his smile was not at all idiotic. His pose was on the whole quite different from the times when I had met him previously. More calm, more intelligent, at times even commanding. Once he became excited, furious: The fare served us was choice, delicious, the costliest dishes that Foyot could provide. And the wines were abundant and of the choicest brands. But during the serving of one of the courses something seemed to have gone wrong, I do not know whether it was in regard to the wine or the vegetables. Yuratoku momentarily stopped all serving, sent the waiters out, and when the head waiter hurried into the room an instant later the lightning descended on him, and Yuratoku gnashed his teeth with rage. This happened behind Mr. Smith's back and lasted only a few sec-

Digitized by Google

onds. But I believe that the head waiter has not yet forgotten those few seconds. An uglier demon from the Orient could not be conjured forth than was pictured on the face of our host. Not even Foyot could put anything over on him.

Time and again during the evening I tried to get more definite information about Kinzo Yuratoku and the company into which he had brought me. But the Japanese only smiled obsequiously and did not understand my question. There was apparently some kind of freemasonry among them. The title of prince was a sort of nickname, and as for Yuratoku himself, he was an excellent journalist who kept the numerous readers of *Tokyo Jiji-Shimpo*—or was it *Asaka Asahi Shimbun*?—well informed about the battles in France. He had been in Europe before the war began. Besides, he studied the philosophy of religion at the Sorbonne, and was a pupil of Bergson. As soon as the war was over, he would return home to the University of Tokio. It was the «keeper of the keys,» the loud-laughing European, who confided this much to me in the course of the evening. The others had told practically nothing. «Ah yes, a charming fellow,» was about all that I could get out of them concerning him. But about other matters they showed interest and responded freely when I talked to them. They asked many questions and gathered about me as a center. As

Digitized by Google

the evening progressed we found ourselves more at ease. The coffee and cigars created in the company a feeling of comfort, a mood bordering on intimacy. One or two became a little talkative later in the evening, told stories and made a few disclosures. But that was surely the fault of those confounded opium cigarettes. That became quite clear to me when I finally woke up late in the forenoon the next day. Oh, those opium cigarettes! And what about the trick of hanging poisoned decorations on the walls of a banqueting-hall! I was green in the face until late in the evening—that is, the day after.

The Japanese had begun to interest me, and a few days after the Foyot entertainment I took a notion to call on him just as a compliment. Rue Damremont, No. 179, was the address to which I had sent him Bojer's book. But I was rather surprised when, after a long search, I found this number. It was one of the most wretched, dilapidated, and ugly-looking buildings still standing on Montmartre. The house lay in a narrow alley, dirty, horrid, dark. A narrow rat-hole led into the yard, from which a tumbledown staircase went up through the three stories of the house. A swarm of ragged, dirty children filled the yard; questionable—or rather, unquestionable—women met me on the landings; coarse laughter, gramophone music, or the shrieking of children struck my ears as I rang

Digitized by Google

at the various apartments and made inquiries. But nobody knew or had heard of any journalist named Kinzo Yuratoku. The queer-sounding name only aroused laughter or suspicion. «What the devil did I want, anyhow? Was I a *mouchard,* perhaps, or a deserter? No rooms to let, here, monsieur. Please get out!» Or they simply slammed the door in my face. I searched through the «coop» as well as I could, but came to the conclusion that my Japanese had never set his foot inside the place.

From Montmartre I went directly to the head porter at Foyot's, and used a couple of five-franc notes as a help, as I carefully questioned him about the Japanese party of last Saturday and about our genial host, Prince d'Yuratoku. But the porter did not know much. The only thing he could venture to say for sure was that the third European member of the company, the «funny man,» he with the ruddy face, was a clerk at the Japanese embassy in Paris. For that matter, the majority of the guests were somehow connected with the embassy. The reservations for the feast had all been made through the *clerk.* He had no idea as to the identity of Monsieur Smith or Thompson. The bills had been settled promptly and the tipping attended to properly.

A month passed, and I had other matters to think about than the Japanese and his queer apparitions:

Digitized by Google

The Germans were approaching Paris; «Big Bertha» began to harass various quarters of the city, and Gothas or Zeppelins visited us almost every night. There were interesting but unpleasant moments. I had discovered a small bomb-proof location down on the river wharf, where I sought refuge when the bombardment became too furious and offensive. It was a little retreat at the foot of one of the piers of Pont des Arts, just this side of the Institute. Huge blocks of stone, a yard thick, protected me on three sides; on the fourth I had a view of the Louvre and the heights of Montmartre, where I could watch the thrilling combats of the airplanes up in the air, and be in comparative safety, even if the bombs dropped quite close to me. I had already experienced many nerve-racking nightly episodes down there in my refuge under the bridge by the Seine, and rather enjoyed every chance I had of sitting there within my stone walls where I could watch the fireworks which hissed and popped around and above me. I thought I had found a splendid hiding-place, and congratulated myself on being alone. The Parisians, as a rule, crowded together in cellars or were jammed into the Métro when the bombardment began. Here I sat all alone, in the front row, so to speak, and escaped being stupefied by cellar air and foul odors of the Métro. It was a brilliant idea of mine.

Digitized by Google

But something happened. On a veritable night of judgment, one of the worst that we experienced, I sat again in my stone «cupboard» down by the Seine. Just as I crawled in I thought I noticed that others beside myself were under the vault of the bridge. Two or three men, apparently disguised, were huddled together in the darkness farther in under the bridge. They fell back a little as I entered, but no sooner had I found my place when they came sneaking in, as if spying on me. My corner was so well hidden that they passed by a couple of times without seeing me. But, there, suddenly, they stood directly in front of the opening. «*Bouge pas!*» («Don't move!») I looked straight into the muzzle of a revolver, and back of it were three of the worst *apache* types that I have ever seen. Three full-blooded Parisian *apaches*, with sweater, scarf, and all. I shall be very brief. The situation was not such as to encourage much delay on my part: They ordered me to hold up my hands, thereupon I was *fouillé* (searched) and robbed according to all the rules of the game. My pockets were emptied of every scrap and particle: papers, money—everything! As luck would have it, I had left my watch on the table when I hurriedly left home; but the chain, fastened to the pocket, hung outside the vest, and they took that and raised a devilish row about the watch, of course. «He has dropped it,

Digitized by Google

«He has dropped it, the swine,» said one of them. «Hand over the light.»

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

the swine!» said one of them. «Hand over the light!» And then I noticed a fourth man, behind the other three, turning a bull's-eye lantern from inside his coat, directing it first at me, then down upon the pavement where I was standing. For a moment I was dazzled by the light, then I looked over it at the man who manipulated the lantern. He was a little runt in a cheap cap and long coat. *Kinzo Yuratoku!* I knew him instantly. We were not a yard apart. I could have reached over and pulled the horn-rimmed glasses from his face. There was not—and is not at this moment—the slightest doubt in my mind as to his identity. He was unshaven and ugly, but I recognized every line in that yellow, square face of his. And the horn-rimmed glasses, the coat—the very same, long, ink-spotted coat, which he wore when I encountered him as a street vender on the corner of Rue Lepic. And besides: *He* also instantly recognized *me*! Our eyes met for a brief second. Quick as lightning he drew back the lantern, stooped down, stepped back, and disappeared in the darkness. Soon after the rest were through with me. They left me plucked clean. I heard them mounting the embankment on the other side of the bridge.

September 9th, 1916, I was the victim of a slight unpleasantness. I had planned, as in the previous year, to attend the anniversary celebration of the

Digitized by Google

battle of the Marne. It is held every year on the 10th of September, at Champigny—the place where the Germans were nearest to Paris in 1914. In 1916 the papers announced that access to it was free, although the locality was within the enlarged military zone. One needed simply to ask for a *laissez-passer*—which anyone could obtain in his own police court. Like many others, I applied for my pass to the police commissioner in my precinct, but was met by a curt refusal. Repeated efforts for the same purpose brought no satisfactory result; on the contrary, I met with unfriendly, even discourteous treatment. The inspector was irritable and cross, said he owed me no explanation and virtually showed me the door. I made a bee line for the Norwegian Legation, to invoke, as usual, Minister Wedel Jarlsberg's assistance. I was not aware of having wronged the French and could not understand the treatment I had received at the hands of the police department. Minister Wedel did not understand it, either; he got into action at once—we Paris Norwegians have infinite cause for gratitude to him for what he did for us during the war—and sent the counselor of the Legation—at present the Norwegian Minister in Washington—Mr. Bachke, with me over to the police court to clear up the misunderstanding. I waited outside; Mr. Bachke went in; the interview with the inspector took a long time. When

Digitized by Google

he came out he smiled and said: «Well, this is a rather serious matter, Mr. F——. It appears that you are listed with the Paris police department as a suspicious character—very much under suspicion.» Well, that was something of a surprise! I surely had no idea that my war telegrams and articles to *Aftenposten* had been thus interpreted in France. We rushed back to the Legation. But then Mr. Wedel rose up and pounded the table. «Get my hat and cane!» said he. «What kind of a d—— nonsense is this, anyhow?» We went together across the Place des Invalides, the short distance from the Legation in Rue Fabert to the foreign office at Quai d'Orsay, where Mr. Wedel asked for an immediate interview with Monsieur Briand, who at that time was both premier and foreign secretary. It took a couple of minutes—Mr. Briand had another caller. But presently the door was opened to Mr. Briand's office, and *Monsieur l'ambassadeur de Norvège* was asked to come in. Briand cordially shook hands with a man just coming out, and at the same time showed Mr. Wedel in. And thus I know that Minister Wedel Jarlsberg and Kinzo Yuratoku passed each other on the threshold of Aristide Briand's office. For it was Yuratoku; no mistake could have been possible. He was dressed in the height of fashion, frock-coat, white spats over patent-leather shoes. He did not see me, and

Digitized by Google

I did not try to draw his attention. I was struck by his catlike gait. Stooping a little, absolutely noiseless, he seemed to glide over the carpet. Without looking around, he took his hat and cane lying on a chair, and quietly vanished through the door. He did not even bow in salute to the officers in the anteroom. He did not see them. He slipped out like an eel.

An account of the satisfaction my complaint received does not come within the scope of this story. Nor any praise of the marvelous exactness with which the French kept record of strangers during the war. But of course a mistake may happen. Briand was quite categorical in his conversation by telephone with the police commissioner. This is the only time I have met Briand personally.

One evening toward Christmas I had strayed over to one of the smaller theaters between the Avenue de l'Opéra and the Bourse. I do not recall the name of the theater—it was a variety house, and the program throughout was third class. But a friend of mine had told me about one of the numbers which I absolutely should not fail to see. It was something of the most phenomenal that could be imagined—of its kind. And so, there I sat and was bored throughout the program until finally the great number appeared: «The X-ray man! ‹The Wonder› from whom nothing is hidden!»—And I will admit that I was startled. It

Digitized by Google

was the blackest magic that I have ever been in contact with. The man on the stage wore a black velvet mask over his face, and he had a helper, who operated down in the hall the whole time. The helper said not a word, and constantly had his back turned to the stage. I wonder if anyone knows how it all can be explained. It was true that to the man on the stage nothing was hidden. He instantly named the contents of pocketbooks, ladies' handbags, purses, and sealed envelopes. Without the slightest hesitation he gave the numbers of the bank notes which a person in the audience held in his hand, the number inside the closed watch case, the names and dates of newspapers hidden in one's inside coat pocket, etc. The assistant never touched the objects. He was down among the audience primarily to assist the questioners and see to it that they were presented in their turn. For nearly every lady and gentleman in the audience wanted a chance to test his ability. But the magician on the stage carried his skill further than above described. With his back to the public, he wrote on a large blackboard the inquirer's name, residence, age—anything called for. «How have I spent the afternoon?» The man with the mask told promptly and connectedly, but in a somewhat staccato voice, how the time had been spent, from place to place, the street, house number, together with So-and-so, «over to your office,

Digitized by Google

then to the Café de la Paix, where you met Mademoiselle X ——» (the name was given), «who now sits by your side in seat No. 17, row 4, 1st tier of boxes.» The consternation was great and general, all the more as the disclosures were repeated several times, and their accuracy constantly confirmed by the questioners, who—as far as could be ascertained—had offered themselves, and were without any previous contact with the man on the stage. As for me, I was quite overwhelmed by what I saw and heard. The performances were in themselves inexplicable, but—what was most puzzling and incomprehensible to me—the man with the sixth sense was none other than Kinzo Yuratoku! Both the magician and his assistant were Japanese. And this fact, perhaps, from the moment of his entrance upon the stage, had led my attention in a certain direction. His voice, figure, the visible portion of his face—everything—pointed exactly to my Oriental friend of the many strange encounters of the previous months. But that I should also find him here, practising this sort of *métier* seemed to me so improbable, that the entire time I sat and tried to convince myself that I must be mistaken. I simply must have gotten Kinzo on the brain. It was, of course, one of his countrymen—for to us Europeans the great majority of Japanese look alike. On the whole, I began to doubt whether a personage

Digitized by Google

called Kinzo Yuratoku really existed. He was a product of the imagination, nothing more. But as I sat in conflict with my own thoughts, that elegant little gentleman with the velvet mask continued his startling disclosures. *These* were at any rate palpable enough —the whole audience was in ecstasy over his miracles. Suddenly, almost inadvertently, I acted as follows: The assistant just then stood close to me, «attending» a «subject» in the seat in front of me. I rose, leaned forward, and seized him by the collar. «Try me,» said I, and hung on to him. I did not release my hold until he was through with the lady in front of me; then we stood face to face with the row of seats between us. «‹*S'il vous plaît*›, *monsieur*,» said he, and looked sharply at me. I was a little confused, did not exactly know how to proceed, but put my hand gropingly into my inside coat pocket. Thus I stood with my left hand grasping a paper in my pocket. At the same moment a voice came, clear and loud, from the stage, «A letter.» I looked that way. The Japanese stood with his back to the hall. He continued in his slightly staccato voice, but clearly and distinctly: «From a mother to her son. From a country—*de Norvège*,» briefly, and every word stressed. «Address, 66 Rue de Seine.» And then *this* happened, which to me seemed to come as a matter of course, as if I had

Digitized by Google

stood there waiting for it: The Japanese jerked his head to one side, not enough so that his eyes could reach the place where I stood: «*Ah, bons oir, cher collègue!*» said he. «*Vous voyez où je suis*» («You see where I am»). And these words, which closed the séance «*Je suis partout, monsieur*» («I am everywhere, sir»)!

Not until some time later did I discover that I still had my left hand in my inside pocket. I pulled out the paper and looked at it. It was a Christmas letter from my mother in Lillehammer.

For a long time, about two years, I lost sight of the Japanese completely. I inquired about him now and then, at the Maison de la Presse, in the Society of Foreign Journalists, and among colleagues whom I met at the front or in Paris. But I could find no trace of him. To the majority his name was not even known.

And then the last time:

The war was at last over and I was ready to leave for Norway and home. In the line, waiting for passport inspection, as I was going on board the steamer between Rouen and Calais, I happened to stand beside him. Great scene of recognition. Joy registered on both sides. Yes indeed, he had been in Paris all the time, but had been very much occupied with

Digitized by Google

various activities outside of journalism. Now he was on his way to northern Europe, where he had been appointed secretary of a Japanese legation!—Well, well, how fortunate! We shall be traveling together all the way! Yes, that is—he was going to Copenhagen, and was not quite sure as to what route he would be allowed to choose across the North Sea. But we would at least be together as far as London. And there we ought to arrange to put up at the same hotel. That would be very pleasant; we would have a good time together the two evenings we both had planned to stop over in London. It was he who insisted, and I finally yielded—though I could not afford it—that we go to the Hotel Carlton, where he had made his own reservations from Paris. He had his way, and I did not regret it. We spent two festive days in London. He knew London from previous visits—at least he was acquainted with the most amusing variety theaters and the best restaurants. I was forced to be his guest everywhere—he was offended if I made a move to settle the bills. He was a society man *par excellence*, elegant, genial, and well bred, and with a contagious good humor which I never had thought he possessed. His gayety impressed me at times as being a little forced, and I could never get him to talk about our previous meetings. I tried it,

Digitized by Google

discretely, a couple of time, but he smilingly brushed it aside and immediately turned to other topics. One forenoon, when I called at his room, I met, to my surprise, in the corridor, Monsieur or Mr. Smith-Thompson, the guest of honor at the Foyot banquet, of two or three years back. I saw him come out of Kinzo's door. He had aged considerably and looked worn and nervous, but I recognized him at once. When I asked Kinzo about him, he looked surprised and a little irritated. He had not seen Mr. Smith or Thompson at all in London. What did he have to do with that fellow, anyhow? I did not insist and the incident slipped out of our minds. In the evening we had a jollier time than ever; Kinzo was in a festive mood and the gayest of the gay.

We were to leave the next morning—he had decided to accompany me to Christiania *via* Newcastle —but for all that, it was very late when we got to bed that night.

The next morning Kinzo was not at the breakfast table, as agreed. I waited for him a quarter of an hour, then rang him up at his room, but he did not answer. I went to the porter and asked him to find Mr. Yuratoku for me. Our train was to leave in barely half an hour. «Mr. Yuratoku,» said the porter, and looked searchingly at me: «Mr. Yuratoku was taken

Digitized by Google

by the police at five o'clock this morning!» «Taken by the police . . . ?» «Yes, sir, suspected of—arrested for espionage!»

This is the conclusion of my encounters with Kinzo Yuratoku. I have not seen him since. But I came across his name once more, three or four years ago, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald.* The terrible earthquake had ravaged Japan. The American papers were full, column after column, of names of victims. Lists of the best known and most prominent among those who perished—diplomats, scientists —were telegraphed around the world, also to Norway. But it was in the *New York Herald* that I saw his name—Sub-Secretary of State, Professor Kinzo Yuratoku. On his way from the department to his home, he had been crushed beneath a house which collapsed during the earthquake. He was honored with a beautiful and sympathetic obituary. "He was one of Japan's most promising, gifted young men, who already had rendered distinguished service to his country. During the war he resided in Europe, chiefly in France, now as journalist, again participating in special, important missions. In 1919 he was called home, appointed professor, and the following year received the appointment of Sub-Secretary in the Department of Western Affairs, a position for which his eminent ability and previous experience made him

Digitized by Google

especially well qualified. His tragic end will awaken sorrow and regret in wide circles. . . .»

But of course I shall meet him again, some time—*once*, if not more. I am quite prepared for it. If not before, I shall meet him next year at Murmansk. I am to be there as reporter to attend the start of the great Nansen-Eckener transpolar expedition by airship. And at the mooring mast up there will also be found Kinzo Yuratoku. The Chameleon-Japanese is not dead, but alive. He will be on the spot just as surely that day as the times I met him in Paris. His interests, his assignment, his entire position as reporter for Western affairs to his government in Tokio, make it self-evident that he will attend an event so important and sensational as the starting of the world's greatest flying expedition and scientific airship enterprise. Besides, the ice regions are his special domain. At the Foyot banquet ten years ago he had been appointed «director for the northern waters,» with the title of honor, «Prince of Darkness»—«*Prince des Ténèbres!*» On the coast of Siberia he would be in his right element.

I look forward with joy to my next meeting with him.

Digitized by Google

Christmas Eve in the Trenches

My FRIEND, the lieutenant, tells this little story about last Christmas Eve in the trenches. At that time he was still well and active—it was not until September that he had his left leg torn off, in the battle at X. Now he sits here in the easy chair by the fireplace; his cane and one crutch lie beside the chair; the stub of his leg rests on the pillow in front of him, while he tells us, his comrades, the story about Christmas Eve last year:

«Well, yes, it was not exactly with any exuberance of joy that my ‹boys› and I had received the captain's message on the morning of Christmas Eve that the drawing of lots had determined that our platoon was to take its turn in the front line for the two Christmas holidays. Formation at noon. I hadn't had a day off since the war broke out and had had some hope of getting a couple of days' leave in Paris. A fellow likes to call on acquaintances now and then. Now there would be no chance. To me, personally, it really mattered little where I was; in any event, there would be no real Christmas sentiment. But my soldiers did

Digitized by Google

not like it. Hadn't they all that week, every one of them, labored and sweated trying to drain their water-soaked lodgings and arrange the ‹*gourbis*› —that is soldiers' slang for huts and dugouts—as cozily and comfortably as possible, just in anticipation of Christmas? And now they would have to abandon the whole outfit and turn the huts over to others, to trudge along through rain and mud and stand out there in pools of dirt for forty-eight solid hours, perhaps longer. *Bête!* I had to appear gruff toward them. It would not do to allow the least expression of discontent to vent itself, but it was with slow gait and sullen looks that the platoon wearily plodded along in single file like any other caravan, through the *boyaux* in the direction of the rifle slits in the front line.

«You have been down in such a *tranchée* in the front line, haven't you? A piece of ground, an ordinary grassplot, extends outward in a gentle slope. We come up from below through the cross canals, which run in continuous zigzag to prevent flank firing. There is a whole network, a labyrinth, of such *boyaux*, large and small, main streets and narrow alleys, yard-deep channels and stagnant drains, all intertwined and connected, so that it is necessary to put the ‹street signs› with names and numbers of the canals, and arrows pointing forward or back. One might lose his way in there and finally be unable to tell whether one

Digitized by Google

is going from or toward the enemy. Then, suddenly, all these passages are cut off by a deep, wide ditch running perpendicularly to all the rest. This is the firing line—*la première tranchée.* It is deeper than the other trenches, the earth embankment is more solid than the rest, and at intervals of a meter or a meter and a half there are small loopholes on the parapet for observation or firing; this hole is usually walled up with heavy masonry, or there is a steel plate an inch thick into which has been cut a square opening. Along the front wall, inside, runs a bank, half a meter high, on which the soldiers mount when they are to observe or fire. Otherwise they sit on this bank with their backs to the enemy, or else lie down on it; but they are not allowed to do this if there is the least ‹activity› in the air. Finally, for the sake of the story, I must call to your attention the fact that there is a lookout post at either end of the trench, and often one at the center of the line; they are like small watch-towers, where the observer—the *guetteur* —sits shot-proof behind a wall of sand-bags or boulders. At every interval of 150 meters along the firing line a narrow subway goes back eight or nine paces and down into a large bomb-proof vault, where the men on guard may seek refuge if the bombardment just above the trench becomes too violent.

«I am telling you somewhat elaborately how we

Digitized by Google

were installed, in order that you may more easily follow the account when we get to the events of the evening. But wait—I have entirely forgotten to tell you about the Germans and their line. About thirty meters distant and a little higher up the hill was the German line. Really, their position was stronger and better than ours, but fortunately the breastwork in front of our line was built up so high that it completely obstructed any peering down into our trench. Here and there between the two lines there had been a heavy net of barbed wire; now, not only had the shrapnel from both sides played havoc with the wire entanglement, pulled up the posts so that they hung dangling in the air or lay in splinters along the ground, but the Germans had amused themselves by shooting away the wires close to our trench, and we of course had done the same to theirs. An abandoned hay wagon, with shafts and one wheel shot off, stood atilt, a melancholy object, halfway between the two lines. Empty sardine cans and other tins lay strewed on the ground between us—that kind of ‹hand-grenades,› accompanied by more or less friendly shouts, flew daily over from one line to the other. Dirty scraps of paper fluttered between the rocks; a ragged and torn pair of German trousers had been thrown into the barbed-wire netting and jerked back and forth as the wind or the shots caught it.

Digitized by Google

«As we moved into the trench, the chief of the coming-off guard told me that there had been some firing between the lines that day, though not especially lively. ‹You will probably have a couple of quiet days,› said he, as we parted at the ‹observatory›; «Merry Christmas!› And then I saw him disappearing in the *boyaux*, Avenue de Boulogne.

«But somehow it did not remain quiet very long after my boys and I reached our positions. Possibly the Germans had become aware of the change of guard in our line just then and wanted to bid us welcome. They shot pretty lively, but I warrant you that my ‹cockerels› were not timid about talking back, and especially over on the right flank—I had my position at the center of the line—was the action brisk, the bullets flying thick and fast, as though a couple of machine guns were stationed out there. It was Corporal Marius and his troop who were at it on that side. I had noticed earlier in the day that Marius, contrary to his wont, appeared glum, and he was among those who grumbled when orders came for us to enter the firing line Christmas Eve. Poor Marius, he was ordinarily the most quiet and tractable fellow in the world and at the same time brave and aggressive as few; he had already received the war cross and had been cited twice in general orders. I heard his voice now and then between the volleys, and it was

Digitized by Google

evident that he was urging his fellows to fire. A couple of times the ammunition-carriers had to bring additional supplies of cartridges over to the right flank. I had my field-glasses and saw how earth and gravel spurted from the breastwork in front of the German trench, but over our heads, too, the projectiles sang lustily and every now and then we got our showers of earth and pebbles.

«This kept on for a couple of hours. Darkness came on, and nothing of importance had happened, except that one of the boys was hit. He was not struck directly by a bullet, but a piece of rock from a glancing shot against the parapet, which struck him in the head. I saw his brains lying uncovered as they carried him past. He died on the way back to the *boyau*. He was from somewhere near Brest, and I did not know him very well.

«Suddenly everything became quiet over on the German side. Not a shot, not a movement; it was as if the whole trench had become void of life. Gradually a corresponding calm necessarily followed on our side, just a shot now and then, to show that we were on our guard and would not be caught napping.

«It had rained all day; the clouds were heavy and hung low above our heads; wisps of fog floated about the edge of the woods just back of the German lines. An inch-deep pool of muddy water covered the bot-

Digitized by Google

tom of the trench, the earth bench was wet, sticky, and nasty, and the mud oozed down along the wall of the trench. The boys wore their cloaks, and an extra piece of canvas covered their backs and shoulders, but still they were soaked to the skin. Just as darkness set in, the fog cleared away and the air became cold and draughty. Now, when the firing had ceased and the boys just sat still, they became chilled. They huddled together in their wet cloaks, sitting two and two with their backs together, so as to give each other what little warmth they could. The firing had stopped completely.

«Suddenly I heard a loud cry, as of many shouting in unison over in the German trench. It came from about the center of the ditch, and there were at least fifteen or twenty voices shouting together, in rhythm and the same words, but I could not make out clearly what they said. I was lying down, using my field-glass, and wondered what sort of a new ruse they were hatching; but at once, through the twilight, I saw that they had raised over their breastworks at five or six places along the line, a small flag, the striped blue-white streamer—*banderole d'armistice*—which signifies that one wants a let-up of hostilities. I gave orders to raise our *banderoles* also, and they were planted at corresponding points in our parapet. Then a bright light was flashed toward us across the field

Digitized by Google

from the enemy's trench; it was a small searchlight which the Germans previously had made use of; the light flickered back and forth a few times and finally came to rest at a certain point, and lighted up a large white plaque of cardboard about a meter high in the center of the German line. I am not very strong on German, but with the aid of my field-glass I managed to spell out the large black letters in the illuminated cardboard, and wrote down the words as I made them out. It was a rather curious communication—a proposition from the German commander that we should agree upon an armistice from now until seven o'clock, Christmas morning, and that ‹as a mutual guaranty› we should send two men, unarmed, from either side over into the opponent's trenches. I gathered my boys around me, and we discussed the proposition. Strangely enough, there was almost immediate unanimity for its acceptance. We lighted a torch, swung it back and forth over the parapet, and then shouted—fifty or sixty men—in unison the single word ‹*ja*› (yes), the only German word which perhaps the majority of my men knew. François Josse and Etienne Troublet at once reported themselves willing to go over to the German line; these two were my most dependable men, and I had not the slightest hesitation in letting them go. They would use both eyes and ears to our benefit later: and both of them

Digitized by Google

knew a little German, for François had been a sailor for several years and had served on German boats, and Etienne had been a waiter at a restaurant in Munich for a year and a half. For safety's sake we fixed up a manikin—stuffed a soldier's cloak and hoisted it over the rampart and kept it moving there awhile, but not a shot came from the German line. Then Etienne and François laid aside their guns and packs, keeping only their provision bags, and into these we packed some bread, a few sardine boxes, cigarette packages, etc.,—we knew there was a scant supply of these things over in the German line. Thereupon Etienne and François crawled over the breastwork and soon disappeared in the darkness. Soon after two Germans jumped down into our trench.

«I now felt certain that the Germans were honest in the matter of the armistice, and that we consequently could settle down at leisure for the night. I gathered the boys into the large ‹catacomb› in the center, explained to them that they were free until the next morning at 6:30, and that only three observers would have to do guard duty in the trench. We drew lots and the posts were assigned. The rest of the platoon settled down in the ‹catacomb,› lighted a huge bonfire in the middle of the vault, and then the men got busy drying clothes, making up beds, cooking coffee, etc.,—it was going to be very comfortable

Digitized by Google

down in our cave that night. Toward seven o'clock a cooked supper was sent us through the subsidiary trenches farther back. This was both more abundant and better prepared than usual, for the commandant had given orders that there were to be extra rations in the front line, Christmas Eve. We were served a lordly repast. Thick, shining cuts of steak, with two eggs for each man, soup, vegetables, cheese, and fruit; no better food in a first-class restaurant in Paris. Each man got his bottle of wine, sealed and of special quality, in honor of the day; the commander had also sent along a couple of bottles of stronger drink, addressed to me, and during the evening I had the *petits verres* passed around to the boys. Poor fellows! to them such moments were few and far between, and drenched and frozen as they had been earlier in the day, they might well need a little stimulant. A package of cigarettes was also distributed to each one of them,—the warm blue smoke floated through the room, which became warm and cozy, almost like a Chinese opium den.

«Our two German guests seemed to be having the time of their lives, and to my surprise I noticed that our boys almost vied with one another in their efforts to be friendly and congenial toward them. Of course they had to put up with raillery and coarse jests, but the *poilus* saw to it that the Germans were stuffed with

Digitized by Google

the best food, toasted them repeatedly, and quizzed them about their *Gretchens*, in a language of which the Germans probably understood very little. And they returned the toasts, talked incessantly, and vowed upon their honor that not a single German had any grudge against the French, who were *noble Feinde*. The two Germans had their pockets filled with large, black cigars when they came—their Christmas present to the enemy. Unfortunately, they were not sufficiently appreciated,—the *poilus* preferred their own cigarettes to the German ‹cabbage leaves.›

«At about eight o'clock our company's *vaguemestre* [baggage-master] came up with the mail, and now began the incident of this Christmas Eve which I can never forget. You know, the most important event of the day is the distribution of the mail in the trenches. Oh, if only those at home could realize with what intensity this moment is looked forward to by the soldiers! Home and their loved ones are always in their minds—in war time a hundred times more than ordinarily they feel the ties of kinship, home, and friends. A greeting, a letter, a package, is like a ray of sunshine in the gray monotony of a soldier's life in the trenches. The ‹rear› ought to know how the ‹front› longs for it!

«This evening there was three times as much mail

Digitized by Google

as usual. The *vaguemestre* had five helpers for carrying packages, papers, and letters. And then came that blessed moment when every man withdrew to read the news and messages from home. Lying down, sitting, or standing, they devoured with large, shining eyes what the folks at home had to tell them—good, bad, and indifferent things, but still, this evening everything was important and interesting. I watched their expressions round about me, saw how their thoughts were far away among those nearest and dearest to them in life.

«Over in a corner, by himself, sat Marius, crouching as he read his letter. Big, strong, burly Marius, whom all the boys had fun with because, as they said, he was always ‹thinking of his girl.› I have talked a little about him already. He was from Le Havre, and a dock hand by occupation. He would carry on his broad shoulders meal-sacks of two hundred kilos when the boats loaded or unloaded. I knew his history well; he had told me all one night while we were on picket duty together, and every time he had any news, good or bad, he would come and speak to me about it. He was like a child in his attitude toward me—I don't know why. Toward the rest he was silent and reserved, but I had won his confidence, and since that night on the outpost I had shared his life.

«Marius was to have been married just when the

Digitized by Google

war broke out. Would that he had! They had known each other for many years, and he had always been fond of her, though she was not rich, only pretty. For a year she had been working as a waitress in a café at Havre; the café was located down by the quay, and Marius had formed the habit of dropping in every evening when he came from work. Soon she laughed and smiled at him also, and they were good friends. He knew well that Louis Fevre, chauffeur for Consul Dupont, also liked Marie, and that he was after her constantly. But Marie had said that she did not care about Louis any more, and he had better let her alone. One Sunday last summer she had said that she would marry Marius, for she loved him, and they had decided on the first Sunday in August as their wedding day. They knew where they would live, and Marius had already bought quite a lot of furniture and new clothes. But then came the war. Marius had to leave. The chauffeur Louis was mobilized, too. And Marie was left alone; she had written to Marius often during the first months, but lately the letters had been fewer and far between.

«One day Marius came to me and told me something which he could not understand. He had received a letter from his mother, and it said, among other things, that Louis had ‹come home with his wounded arm, as you know, and he brought greetings from

Digitized by Google

you, and we are glad to know that all is well with you. He has been down to call on Marie and has brought her your greetings, being that he had been together with you in the same trench.»

«Now this was what Marius could not understand. For he had never seen the chauffeur Louis during the entire war and had not talked with him. They were not chummy, Louis and he, not to Marius' notion.

«So now, Marius sat by himself over in a corner reading his Christmas letter. I was hoping that this time it brought him good news. But—why is there a sudden trembling of his huge body, why does he crush the letter in his hands until the big knuckles are white with the strain?

«Marius came over to me soon after that, and asked if he could have two more drinks. He wanted two. Then he asked also—and his voice was strangely thick and husky—mightn't he have guard duty from eleven to one? It was so hot and stuffy inside—one of the other boys might be free. I questioned him more closely about the news from home—I was really a little anxious about him, for his face was gray and his eyes queer and flickering—but he would not admit that anything was wrong. ‹Yes, thank you,› said he, everything was quite well at home.

«There was no sleep to be had down in the ‹catacombs› this side of midnight. Everyone wanted to

Digitized by Google

wait for midnight. There had been a gradual rising of spirits down in the cave. Over on one of the benches sat about twelve men, playing cards; the coffee-pots were humming over the hot coals in the center of the floor and everybody could go and help himself whenever he wanted to. The Germans had become hilarious and red in the face. The younger of them even wanted to start dancing, but our boys wouldn't let him. Along the benches the boys were sitting or lying, deeply absorbed in the things received from home—books, woolens, calendars, photographs—whatever they might be.

«Marius had been assigned guard duty. I had visited the posts a couple of times, and he sat quietly behind the sandbags in his ‹observatory› and looked through the peephole into the darkness. His loaded rifle lay beside him. At about half past eleven—I had gone down into the ‹catacombs› again—I was surprised to see Marius in full equipment coming down through the cellar entrance. I was just on the point of calling him down for thus carelessly leaving his post, but he protestingly waved his hand at me: ‹just for a minute, Lieutenant,› said he. And then he went straight over to the bench where lay the things he had received from home a few hours ago. They were his Christmas presents: two jars of preserves and a heavy, warm woolen jacket. He took one of the Germans by

Digitized by Google

the shoulders. ‹This is yours,› said he, and gave him the jacket, and then, addressing the other, ‹These you are to have, you little runt,› and gave him the two jars of apple preserves. And before the boys realized it, he was going out through the cellar entrance again. The boys laughed and the Germans became more hilarious than before.

«As the time approached midnight I made another round of the trench. It was quiet and not so dark as it had been earlier in the evening. There were breaks in the clouds, through which a few stars gleamed. Not a sound was to be heard. Even the cannon down in Champagne, which had been thundering until ten o'clock, were now silent—Christmas Eve!—bringing a moment of peace, after all! I had visited the two outer end posts; there remained only Marius' ‹observatory› on the left. But I stopped a little to the right of the entrance to our cave, stood there leaning against the breastwork, thinking about the approaching moment.

Midnight, Christmas Eve.

Just then a sound from the German trenches reached my ears. It was a song, a Christmas hymn, sung in unison by strong bass voices. I knew the melody; it was our own hymn as well, the world's Christmas hymn.

Digitized by Google

«Rapid firing over the whole line!» ***He digs into the cartridge box and wants to reload.***

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

«At the same moment a shadow glides past me and drops into the cellar entrance. It is Marius, for I recognize his broad shoulders. I hurry after him, but come too late. On the next to the lowest step of the earthen stairway, with his back to me—the canvas in front of the entrance has been torn aside—sits Marius, with his gun leveled, firing into the catacomb! Three—four—five shots, the whole chamber! He howls like a wild beast between the shots, and breaks out in an insane laughter. «It was you who torpedoed her!» he yells. «*Boche, boche,* rapid firing over the whole line!» He digs into the cartridge box and wants to reload. Then from behind I rap him on the head with my revolver, and the gun falls out of his hands.

«There is not much more to tell. Two of my men and the big German were dead, and a couple of Marius' comrades wounded. We carried the bodies back and got Marius tied up, for when he regained consciousness he was as crazy as before. I tried to talk to him. But he returned to the «letter» at every outburst. I found the letter the next morning, when we emptied his pockets. It was from his mother. I cannot remember it all, but the last sentences were something like this: «. . . for now she is living with him nearly all the time, both day and night, and there is much talk about it among our neighbors. Please

Digitized by Google

ask your captain for leave and come home as soon as you can. For, after all, it is you she loves. . . .»

«At ten minutes past seven Christmas morning the Germans were again firing as if crazy. Our saddest moment was when the young German, just before the time was up, jumped back alone over the rampart.»

Digitized by Google

The Violin

I SHALL never forget the Sunday forenoon when I first met her. It was at Versailles, the first Sunday in May, 1917. My colleague, the American journalist, Frank Gibbons, and I had been at the front a fortnight, getting our share of the life of frightfulness on the Somme. We returned to Paris together, beaten and bruised by what we had seen and heard. We needed rest, a loosening up of the nerves, which constantly, for two weeks, had been under high tension. We took a notion to go out to Versailles that Sunday morning—it was the day of the first great spring exodus from Paris, a yearly recurring festival at Versailles, the Sunday when the fountains play for the first time after the isolation of winter, *le dimanche des grandes eaux.*

Together with hundreds of others, we started from the station up toward the palace, strolled in wonderful spring weather over the famous stone-paved area inclosed within the two enormous wings of the historic palace. The sun shone bright, the military band played, the fragrance of trees in their verdure of

Digitized by Google

spring surrounded us in fullest vigor and charm; it was as if all nature, humanity as well, by one stroke of magic had been released from a year-long nightmare and now suddenly had awakened to the freshness of morning, radiant, playful, in complete and happy ignorance of everything that had to do with war and its horrors.

On Frank Gibbons and myself this sudden transition from the «front yard of hell» and the carnage of the trenches on the Somme had a double and unnatural effect. Our nerves were relaxed too soon; silence and depression were replaced by their direct opposites; childish, ridiculous, unrestrained wantonness possessed us; we acted like calves when they are first let out in the green pasture of spring after having stood all winter in darkness and cold. We could hardly walk properly. Our conduct and speech lacked control. «Look at her, will you! Well, well! That's something for you, old man!» A pretty young lady was walking alone ahead of us, across the square. Plain but neat costume, a small bouquet of violets in her hand. It was she, Capi Delys, the person who was destined to play a certain *rôle* in the lives of both of us for the next year and a half.

I prefer to omit the little episode previous to our acquaintance. We all know how such things happen. I still remember her amusing, rather striking manner

Digitized by Google

of beating back our first «attacks.» She stopped, remained standing, and calmly looked us over, from head to foot, a while. Her lips curled into a slight smile. I have often thought about that smile and wondered how deeply she sounded us, how correctly she weighed us both at this first trial. Then she answered gayly and frankly: «Good morning, gentlemen! Very kind of you. But I ask that you tell me at once who and what you are. I am Mademoiselle Capi Delys. Dutch, musician, and journalist!»

Now, that was an introduction! Frank mumbled his name, which he should not have done, and, on the whole, it was *we* who were unsteady and outmatched. She acted the perfect lady, intelligent and jolly, keen and playful; she spoke English, German, and French with equal facility, was surprisingly well informed in geographical matters, spoke about Christiania and Boston as if she had visited both places many times; she was well posted on all topics that we happened to touch upon, not to mention history of art and music, in which she floored us completely. On the whole, it was a very amusing and interesting acquaintance, all the more so as we were all journalists—she, too, was war correspondent for a Dutch-Javanese paper—and consequently we were not short on subjects to talk about. Like us, she had gone out to Versailles that Sunday forenoon in order to see the fountains play,

Digitized by Google

and in like manner to get away from the usual noise and temper of Paris. The latter was surely not very easy or reassuring just at this time, when Gothas and Zeppelins were hovering about the city. We went strolling around the park together two or three hours, enjoyed the music, admired the fountains, found pleasure in watching the groups of people, the family parties picnicking on the lawn of the Petit Trianon, the children at play among the century-old trees and on the slope from the château toward *le grand lac.* Time passed altogether too fast, and I believe it went too fast even for Frank Gibbons. It was he who proposed that we have lunch together at Hôtel du Château. Mademoiselle Delys accepted our invitation. It turned out to be a delightful luncheon, and we had another delightful hour over our coffee afterward. It was six o'clock in the afternoon when we boarded our train for Paris. We both escorted Mademoiselle Delys to the door of her apartment in Rue Tocqueville. It was an old, neat-looking house, set back in a garden, which gave it an air of distinction. I thought it was needless for Frank Gibbons to go the long roundabout way to Rue Tocqueville, for he lived far away on the other side of the Seine, on *rive gauche.* But Frank said he could afford to waste time that day, and of course he had to have his way. Frank had been my friend from the beginning of the war. A fine, straight-

Digitized by Google

forward fellow was Frank, but somewhat unbending and self-willed. As a rule there was no use in giving him advice or trying to tell him what to do.

During the months following I often met Capi Delys. The first time I wrote her a card and asked if she had time and would care to have tea with me at the Café de la Paix. She came, and after that we met frequently. To begin with, I was puzzled as to her habits and pretensions, and felt perhaps a little uneasy about the modesty of the «diversions» that I had the facilities for offering her. A poor devil of a reporter has to go easy and not fly higher than is consistent with safety. But there was no risk in the case of Mademoiselle Delys. If she had extravagant habits, she knew very well how to be plain and unpretentious with me, and I really got the impression that she found pleasure in my company and enjoyed our meetings. We became good friends. In music we had common interests; we often went together to concerts, occasionally to the opera. I knew also that she played the violin, how well I had not ascertained, but that she was thoroughly musical and loved music was a fact that one could not miss. And how well she knew Norwegian music! I rejoiced in hearing her talk about Grieg, Svendsen, and Sinding, and she was enthusiastic about the Norwegian folk melodies. She had a theory to which she reverted often:—the world's mu-

Digitized by Google

sic was to be revived from the north. «There is coming,» said she, «*une renaissance musicale* from sources in the steppes of Russia and the glaciers of Norway!» She would not give many sous for the new constructive music of France and Germany; it was a phenomenon of the decadence, a «charivari,» which would be forgotten in twenty years. There were only two kinds of music, the classical and the «natural music»—«*les airs des sentiments primitifs de la nature.*» Thus she sat and became lost in music and theories, far beyond my comprehension.

But we also had other more tangible and concrete things to talk about—the war, the *communiqués*, the front, and the air raids. She was vividly interested in her journalistic activities and wanted to know how I planned my telegrams and correspondences. She herself did not telegraph, but sent two or three times a week correspondences by fast mail to her paper in Batavia. I must not forget to mention that she considered herself Dutch, though born of emigrant parents and brought up on the island of Sumatra, where, as far as I could understand, her father—the owner of a large plantation—still lived. However, she talked very little about her parents, and likewise kept her own personality in the background. A couple of years before the war she had gone «home» to Holland, and came in 1914 to Paris in order to continue her mu-

Digitized by Google

sical studies. When the war broke out and her «professor» was mobilized, she began to write and soon established connections with a couple of the more important papers in the Dutch Indies and a smaller paper in Holland. Her name was entered on the list of recognized war correspondents at the French press bureau in the Rue François 1ier, and she had participated in a couple of trips to the front, in the Aisne sector, the Argonne forest and around Verdun. It goes without saying that the development of the war especially occupied our attention. She was intensely sympathetic to the cause of the Allies; she was deeply moved, shocked, and nervous every time reports came of German success and advance. I admired her insight into topography and strategy; she talked intelligently about the front, the attacks and counter-attacks; about general reserves, lines of defense, submarine warfare, and our fleets; about the disorganization from within and the revolution in Russia; about England's supremacy on the sea and Austria-Hungary's difficult race problem. Politics and sociology, history and geography, military strategy and tactics, every question raised and made acute by the World War seemed to come within the range of her information. And her knowledge and reasoning were in no manner superficial. She was an extraordinary woman—no doubt about that. But she never

Digitized by Google

paraded her knowledge, she never forced her opinion upon anybody; as a rule she sat and listened intently. If there were several of us, she was silent and reserved. A strangely constituted personality.

One day I received an invitation from her to attend a little *soirée musicale* in her apartment in the Rue Tocqueville. She had added a few cordial words: «There will be only a small circle of good friends, and the music is just myself. Welcome!» Naturally I went, and I have seldom been so surprised. In the first place, by the apartment she occupied. *Somptueux* is the French expression to cover such a habitation—luxurious, costly. Paintings, objects of art, and rugs—beautiful, choice things put together with assured and exquisite taste. It was a house not only beautiful and rich, but at the same time a comfortable home. The music-room was among the most inviting of any that I have ever seen. The colors and furnishings blended together in warm harmony; divans along the walls, an open fireplace, from which the fire threw its flickering light over the rugs, the large, expensive Pleyel piano filling one corner.

But I was still more surprised by the people whom I met there than by the apartment itself. It was indeed not a «small circle»—at least twenty or twenty-five people were assembled in the rooms. And it was truly a motley crowd, mostly men, only five or six

Digitized by Google

ladies, artists, writers, students, a couple of captains of industry, some queer types of uncertain classification, looking like a cross between Italians and Mongolians, many officers, mostly French, but also a couple of British navy lieutenants in uniform. As for the ladies, I gathered that a couple of them were actresses, and one a singer. And in the midst of this heterogeneous company I caught sight of Frank Gibbons! Of course I should have been glad to see at least one acquaintance among so many unknown persons, and indeed I was glad, though I felt that Frank had rather avoided my company for the last few months. We did not associate as much as before, and, to be honest, I did not know that he and Capi were such good friends that she should feel urged or obliged to invite him to this party. But he and I talked to each other as we always had in the past. Capi Delys went around to all and was a most charming and perfect hostess. She had a kind and pleasant word for each one of her guests and now and then became the center of a group of cavaliers doing homage to her. It struck me that she was perhaps a little over-excited; she spoke louder and with greater animation than usual, and there was a flash in her eyes that I had never noticed before. But presumably her duties as hostess had drawn her nerves to a high tension and caused her to seem a little too feverishly elated.

Digitized by Google

Later in the evening she played for us. Never have I heard the equal of her playing. So technically perfect that she undoubtedly could have appeared on the concert stage in any of the world's great music centers and compelled the most unreserved recognition by the critics. Then in her interpretation, an abandon, a beauty of tone, a fervor, which disclosed a musical temperament of the rarest and most genuine order. Her playing was a revelation. She played, among other numbers, Mendelssohn's «Concerto in E minor,» its wonderful «Andante,» the furious tempo of the *molto vivace* in a manner that I have never heard surpassed by Auer's or Kreisler's performance. She played a little melody by Debussy—«The Girl with the Flaxen Hair»; it brought tears to the eyes of others besides myself. Then she played a caprice by Paganini. A witches' dance. Fantastic. And finally—she said it was to please me—she played Grieg's «Sonata in C minor.» I shall not say anything more. I was charmed, confused. What kind of girl was she, standing by the piano, dark-haired, exotic, who thus bewitched us by her playing? And who was that long-haired, unsympathetic Russian who so masterfully accompanied her through all her numbers, even the Norwegian one? Capi Delys became a riddle to me from that evening. Who were her associates? Why had she not told me something about

Digitized by Google

her real life? She herself was more calm when she had finished playing. She was happy, said she, if she had been able to give us a little pleasure. However, lately, she did not play much. . . .

Later in the fall, toward Christmas, I was much of the time at the front, but whenever I came back to Paris I looked up Mademoiselle Delys, or she met me. We used to go together to the telegraph station when I went to send my despatches from Rue Grenelle. She would read through my telegrams, in order to get the latest news from the front or from the War Department, where I went regularly to get the latest survey of the situation or the news outside the official bulletins. She always showed the same interest, and I had to tell her in detail about life at the front. Her papers in Batavia had increased her salary; she wanted to send the best and the most that she possibly could, in order that they might be pleased with her work. For the war was approaching its decisive phase. One day in the spring she came and told me that Rachmaninov was in Norway. The Russian composer and pianist, Rachmaninov. She knew him, she said, and now he was to conduct a big orchestra concert in a city called Bergen. She would like so much to get all newspaper clippings from that city, telling about Rachmaninov's concert—she happened to know one single person in Bergen (she gave a strange-sounding

Digitized by Google

name) and she was sure that he would be obliging enough to send her these reviews. But in those days of mines and torpedoes it would be so difficult to have letters forwarded, especially if they were written in a foreign language. Couldn't I do her the favor of putting her letter together with one of my correspondences to *Aftenposten*—they would, of course, be stamped by the press bureau at the Foreign Office and would pass, *sans phrase*, both censor and inspection—and then ask the editorial department of *Aftenposten* kindly to have her letter forwarded to the addressee in Bergen? Yes, I could not see any objection to that arrangement; gladly would I do her that favor. And so I got her small, sealed letter, put it into a larger envelope addressed to my friend, Chief Secretary Fraas, with instructions to him, and sent it all, together with a correspondence to *Aftenposten*, properly identified and stamped by my friends at the press bureau.

I may as well state at once that two or three weeks later the reply came from Bergen. There must have been a slight misunderstanding between us, for the concert of which Capi Delys showed me the report had taken place in Christiania, as far as I could see from a rapid glance at the clipping. But the letter was sent me by or through Fraas. The men in Bergen had asked him kindly to mail it to me, and to

Digitized by Google

have it forwarded to Mademoiselle Delys. Both her name and address, however, were incorrectly written on the envelope. But I knew for whom the letter was intended and delivered it promptly. During the spring and summer she received in this manner three or four letters from Bergen. I was a reliable letter-carrier.

Capi Delys was a little indisposed and out of humor during this time. She had «annoyances,» she said, and I could understand that something worried her. She did not tell me what it was, and I did not question her. I had become slightly suspicious and began to observe her on the quiet; these all too sudden changes of mood were not quite natural. Time and again it happened that I found her in a state of excitability, in sparkling humor, highly exalted. At such times I did not like her, did not understand her. I could sit and look at her, wondering whether a person excited with wine could look that way! But I had never seen her indulge in strong drinks. She was in a hectic state of fever, her eyes sparkled, the pupils unnaturally enlarged. At other times she was relaxed and tired, barely dragged her limbs; she seemed like a person harassed, broken, and in despair. I pitied her, but could do nothing for her. I had a suspicion, but knew nothing.

One day in August I found out—quite accidentally. I had received an invitation from Mademoiselle

Digitized by Google

Delys to come for the week-end up to Tréport, where she had been staying a few weeks. She had rented two or three rooms in a *maison garnie,* «in order to be near the water and enjoy the sea air,» she said. And not for a long time had I seen her so calm and natural as at just this time. We took long walks toward the sea; she liked to walk there. One walk especially was her favorite—around the harbor, out to the farthest breakwater, where the sea stormed, and the wind seized one until it was difficult to keep one's footing. She used to stand over by the semaphore mast. I can see her yet, leaning against the mast, in a gray raincoat, her varicolored scarf fluttering in the breeze, her lips parted as if to absorb the strong, salty taste of the sea, and her eyes—those eyes, as if constantly gazing, seeking something or other out there on the horizon, where, camouflaged, the huge ironclads of the allied coast patrol now and then emerged as faint silhouettes on the low, gray strip between sea and sky. After these walks Capi used to play for us, for there were several invited guests. The loathsome Russian, her accompanist, lived near by and was a constant guest, likewise the two British naval officers of the *soirée* party in Rue Tocqueville. Goodness knows why *they* were there, but they acted as if they were both equally infatuated with her. It was one of them who opened my eyes. The last eve-

Digitized by Google

ning Capi was suddenly changed. She was having another «spell» of her strange exaltation, was in livelier mood than ever, in a regular frenzy. The *portière* hid me for a moment from the English officers, and I heard one say to the other: «No wonder. She has just swallowed half a gram!»

Then I understood everything. She was a drug fiend. It was the «white poison,» cocaine, which ravaged her nerves and tore her system into shreds. Of course. The pity of it, that I had not understood before! Poor little unhappy Capi!

Again and again I tried to think what might have brought Capi Delys to this state.

One evening Frank Gibbons came up to see me. I had not seen him for a long time. He was silent and queer. After a while he asked me if I had seen or heard from Capi Delys lately. . . . No, not for two or three weeks—nothing at all. . . . Well, hadn't I heard that she had recently been wounded in an air raid on Paris?

And then Frank told me the whole story about that night. He and Capi had been to the Théâtre Français and afterward had supper at a restaurant in Rue du Louvre. About one o'clock in the night, as they were on their way home, the raid came. It was that awful night when bomb-throwing German flying-machines

Digitized by Google

and Zeppelins swarmed over Paris. I remembered the night well. I sat hidden in a stone niche under one of the bridges over the Seine, and saw the fires and heard the explosions. It was an inferno. Capi and Frank had sought shelter in a doorway in one of the side streets straight across from the Vendôme square. A bomb fell on the house opposite and shattered it from the roof down. They were both struck down. Capi was severely wounded by a falling plank. Unconscious, together with ten or twelve other wounded she was immediately lifted into an ambulance and taken to «Hôtel-Dieu,» the hospital near Notre Dame Cathedral. There she had remained a fortnight, but was now discharged as fairly recovered. She was up, and, as far as Gibbons knew, quite well again, but she received no one and did not write to anyone. Should we go together some day and try to see her ——?

We agreed to do so.

But Capi Delys anticipated us. The next morning I received an invitation from her to come over in the evening. She urged, almost begged me to come. She said not a word about what had happened, but had a communication to make to us, her friends, and was sure that it would interest us. She expressly informed me that Frank Gibbons was invited and would come. I went. There was present about the same company

Digitized by Google

as the first time I had been at her house; a few were absent and others, new faces, were there instead; the two English lieutenants had not come. Capi looked brilliant, was in high spirits and merry; no one could imagine that she had faced death the weeks just past. The sleeve of one arm was drawn too far forward; a frill of lace and tulle concealed the hand; but she shook hands with the same firm grip in her right hand as in former days. She laughed and jested, and said that she would play for us later in the evening. She had prepared a spread of food and drinks, which was quite exceptional, and our spirits rose quite high as the evening advanced, and Capi herself took the lead. It was the first time that I had seen Capi drink champagne. She partook liberally, and then we were to dance. She insisted that we must dance; she forced the Russian with the long hair to play the wildest dance melodies, and she herself «jazzed» with each of the gentlemen in turn. She was wild and mad. Suddenly she stood in the center of the table in the *salon*, rapping on a champagne bottle. She wanted to make a speech, she said—a toast for France and her French friends! And then came the worst nonsense that I have ever listened to. She talked about a serpent which crawled on the streets of Paris; over by the Cour de Lions was a hole, a secret tunnel, which led clear to Batavia, and there Poincaré had made an appoint-

Digitized by Google

ment with her for the next night at twelve o'clock. But if Poincaré did not come, the palace at Versailles would be set on fire within twenty-four hours, for England had promised her a safe-conduct to Holland, and if anyone accused her of blackmail, America would withdraw from the war. I am now leaving you, ladies and gentlemen; tomorrow I return to Holland and the land of freedom. «Long live Russia and my memory in France!» She was stark mad! She was helped down. And then she seized the Russian by the hair and pushed him over to the piano. He had to accompany her! *Now* she wanted to play! She found the violin and put the music in place. I do not remember the piece, for just then *it* happened. The Russian had struck a few chords, she stood holding the bow and violin in her right hand, and began as if to mark the tempo. Then suddenly she burst out in an insane laughter. Quick as lightning she bent down, pulled up the tulle and lace on her left sleeve, unwound in furious haste a long bandage from her hand, threw it on the floor and held up her hand, screaming, halfway between a shriek and a sob:

«Ha-ha, messieurs, mesdames! Ha-ha! Who has ever seen anybody play with one—one—*one*—finger of the left hand! Long live music and Capi Delys. Long live ——!»

In the glare of the light from the piano we saw

Digitized by Google

«Long live music, long live I myself!» she screamed again and again.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

plainly the hand that she held aloof; it had a thumb, but no other fingers. A remnant, an ugly stub of a human hand—that was all.

And at the same moment she grabbed the neck of the violin with her right hand, swung it in an arc over her head, and smashed it with a terrific blow against the edge of the piano. Bits of wood flew about our heads.

«Long live music, long live I myself!» she screamed again and again. A few minutes later the house was empty. The servants rushed up and overpowered her. They had to tie her and carry her away.

That was the last time I saw Capi Delys.

The next evening I received strange visitors in my room on the Rue de Seine. Two gentlemen in civilian clothes came and said that they were from *la sûreté générale,* the secret-service office. They showed their badges and identification papers. And then they began to question me about Capi Delys! I asked if she was dead? No; she had been arrested. *She was arrested for espionage.* They had long suspected her, and lately she had been under close observation. The police had shadowed her day and night the month after her visit to Tréport, where I had been with her. The English front and the movements of the fleet on the north coast of France were her «specialty.» She

Digitized by Google

knew surprisingly much about what was happening in the English Channel and large portions of the North Sea. After her arrest that morning there had been found in her apartment in the Rue Tocqueville a number of very compromising documents. There could be no doubt as to her guilt; the British Admiralty had convincing proofs against her. Among her papers had been found a lot of letters from me, and this had brought on the little visit by the police. Of course, no suspicion rested on me, but perhaps I would kindly explain to the gentlemen my relations with Mademoiselle Delys, how I had come to meet her, what were her activities, her interests, who were our mutual acquaintances—in short, what did I know about Capi Delys? I explained to the gentlemen, as well as I could, our innocent association and produced of my own accord the notes I had preserved of those received from Mademoiselle Delys. The innocence of these little notes was at once established, but the gentlemen would have to be permitted to look around my apartment a little closer—«*cela ne vous dérange certainement pas*»—and they very calmly began to dig into all my drawers and lockers—examining every paper in detail. Their *fouillage,* however, hardly gave any foundation for suspicion against me; my various documents, from the departments and the Legation, seemed, on the contrary, to «disarm» the detectives

Digitized by Google

completely, and we parted as the best of friends. Quite of their own accord they even informed me that Mademoiselle Delys' arrest had been made at the last moment. She must have had a feeling that the ground was burning under her feet; she had prepared her flight from France, secured her passport and ticket back to Holland, and had the assurance even last night to give a rousing party, a sort of farewell festival for a number of her friends over in her apartment in the Rue Tocqueville.

I abstained from telling the detective any more than what I was asked about directly. Everything would eventually come out at the proper time—if at all. I neglected also to tell about Rachmaninov and Capi Delys' interest in his concert. It was quite immaterial and concerned other, fully legitimate, sides of her strange character.

That's what I believed *then.* And I acted in absolutely good faith. Now I believe differently. Before the week was over I received another «inclosure» from Chief Secretary Fraas. We all know where it came from and for whom it was intended. I am a little in doubt as to how much I dare tell. I was at that time in the greatest doubt as to what I should do. Surrender it to ——? No! No! And her address was no longer available. I kept the letter in my pocket for a week; it burned holes in my pocket.

Digitized by Google

I became ill from worry, and nervous from the tension. One evening I tore open the letter. Thank goodness! It was only an innocent and harmless missive. A clipping from *Aftenposten*, a press review by Hjalmar Borgstrom. Fifty or sixty lines referring to a French pianiste, by the name of Nathalie Radisse. That was all—no accompanying letter, not a word. The clipping was put inside a folded sheet of blank paper. I sat with the clipping on the table before me, and felt as if a burden had fallen from my shoulders. Thank goodness, there was nothing wrong about this! Borgstrom's review is immune in any court.

But what is that fine pencil annotation at the top of the article? So fine that I almost need a magnifying glass to read it. I held the clipping close to my eyes, against the light from the lamp in front of me. And at the same moment I discovered the holes. The clipping was perforated with thousands of small pin holes! Every second, third, fifth, eighth letter, and so on along the lines, was pierced by a fine needle—so fine that when the paper lay on something it was impossible to see the holes. Only by holding the paper against the light would they become visible. And at the top of the clipping was that microscopic lead-pencil notice—K = C4. Nothing else, whatever. But that was more than enough. I had heard and read sufficiently about the various methods used by spies to

Digitized by Google

get their reports or instructions across the frontier. My first effort to decipher these thousands of pin-pricked letters, where K was to be exchanged for C, produced no results, it is true. It was the transposition number 4, from the end of the alphabet, which at last gave me the «key» to the correct reading. And it was not until long after that, when I got the translation of it from the foreign language, that I understood the contents of the communication. But then my last doubt of the guilt of Capi Delys vanished, my last hope that she, in spite of all, was innocent. Her case, however, had been settled finally long before this. It was clear and obvious, the proofs were overwhelming.

On one of the last days of my stay in Paris Capi Delys was shot. It was a case which aroused considerable attention, although the papers had not many facts to relate about her. It amounted principally to guesses and journalistic embellishments. She faced the firing squad without much show of feeling, on a gray, cold autumn morning in the moat at Vincennes.

When the soldiers aimed, she covered her eyes with one hand. It was a mangled stub of a hand—lacking four fingers.

Digitized by Google

The Coward from the Vosges Mountains

THAT fellow was certainly not among the unlucky ones in the World War. He was not killed, he did not get a scratch or a scar, barely a whiff of poison gas. So it may be properly said that he was among those who got out of it very well.

I know how he got out of it. Oh no, he was not killed—he didn't die. So, if one's destiny is to be measured by death, or scars, or the poisoning of the body, then . . .

But you may read this story and judge for yourself. I am telling it out of my own experience, for I was present. The story of shoemaker Tiboust—Jean Jacques de Tiboust. The «coward» from the Vosges Mountains. He who didn't «get to die» in the war.

It was at Christmas time in 1915 that a law was passed which roused some attention and considerable ridicule. One day all the papers had a notice in bold-faced type announcing *l'ouverture de la chasse*, the opening of the hunting season! That was what people thought funny. The French themselves, as well as we

Digitized by Google

who sojourned with them during the war, all thought that in those days, of all things, hunting was the most plentiful in France. For about a year and a half large areas of France had been open hunting-ground. There was no lack of «game,» either, unfortunately, and millions upon millions of shots had been fired in both open and closed areas in the course of the seventeen months since the war had broken out. It was the greatest and most unrelentless hunt that the world had ever seen. And then there suddenly came a Cabinet order declaring the hunting season open! One could understand why people laughed. What I am telling is, however, not strictly accurate. The hunting season had opened earlier in the autumn, at the regular time. Then toward Christmas there came a new law, a supplementary decree, announcing the extension of the hunting season for that year. And the people poked fun at the wise gentlemen in the Department of the Interior, who in good faith decreed a prolongation of the hunting season at a time when the war raged at its worst! For it was quite evident that this would be a protracted affair—a matter of seven years, Kitchener had said.

But, of course, there was some sense in this ruling of the good gentlemen of the department. Taking «game» in its ordinary meaning, France was beginning to be flooded with that, too. Both in 1914—the

Digitized by Google

war began August 2nd—and now in 1915, almost every able-bodied man had been called to the colors. None, or very few, remained to indulge in *la chasse ordinaire*. The long, coherent German line of invasion from the north had also, perhaps, driven a portion of the «peaceful» game farther south. However that might be, from Central France, and still more from South France, came reports that birds and hares, not to mention rabbits, were doing untold damage to fields and meadows, and in the mountain districts wild animals, *des bêtes sauvages*, began to attack the herds. Something had to be done to beat back this additional danger. The hunting season must be lengthened, the fees reduced, and hunting concessions extended considerably. Such was the purpose of the decree.

One day I received an invitation from an old friend and hunting companion, Baron Jaunez, to accompany him on a hunting trip down in Alsace. Monsieur Max Jaunez was an acquaintance of many years, —from hunting the elk in the Dokka Valley as far back as 1908, and later, from trips in Norway and France, and in Finnish Lapland. He is the most sincere friend of Norway that I know, among foreigners. His home was properly in Lorraine, the German-speaking part of Alsace-Lorraine. But his heart belonged to France. It had happened that when

Digitized by Google

the war broke out, he—whose home, estates, large factories, were located on the German side of the frontier, and who himself had been a deputy from Alsace-Lorraine—one of the irreconcilables in the German parliament—was in Norway. From there he went posthaste to France, where he immediately volunteered for military service. He had now been mobilized about a year and a half, first at the front, later at the War Office in Paris. Sarreguemines in Lorraine, where his factories were located, was occupied by the Germans, all his property was confiscated, and his family banished to the other side of the Rhine. Not many Frenchmen looked forward to the end of the war with more anxiety and solicitude than he.

He now asked me to accompany him on a hunting trip to Alsace. He had one week's leave, and he was well acquainted with that part of the country. It was on the west side of the Vosges, two or three miles above Gérardmer on the French side of the Fecht Valley, that we planned to hunt. Only a few kilometers from the front. But the «shooting» was free; he had bought the rights. There were hares, fowl, wild boars, and an abundance of other game. I must absolutely come along. He would arrange for my *permis de chasse*. All I needed to do was to present

Digitized by Google

myself. And of course I could not resist the temptation.

On the Sunday after January 4th, 1916, we met in the hotel or tavern «Le Cerf» in the village of Stosswihr in the Fecht Valley. The French troops in the beginning of the war, from the 7th to the 20th of August, 1914, had made a violent onrush into Alsace. First under General Bonneau, later under General Pau, they had at the beginning seized many of the «German» chief towns there—Altkirch, Mulhouse, Thann, Dannemarie, and Ceray. Later the Germans came with a strong counter-offensive and reconquered some of the cities. But throughout the entire war France retained at least a small part of the German «Elsass,» a fact which had no small influence upon the «moral» attitude of the population in these much-disputed districts; where, generally speaking, the hearts beat in unison with France. Thirty thousand Alsatians fled, right after the breaking out of the war, over to France. We met one of them on our hunting trip in the mountains, and it is his story that I am going to tell. It is no sadder than that of thousands of others from the *Reichsland* of those terrible years. He was neither killed nor maimed. But the war placed its mark on him just the same. And forever. I shall tell the story in its proper order and sequence.

Digitized by Google

Monsieur Jaunez, Lieutenant Deville, and I met in «Le Cerf» one Sunday evening. Lieutenant Robert Deville was a relative of Jaunez', and had only one arm. His right had been shot off in the battle of the Marne. As a compensation he carried on his coat lapel the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. He was a jolly good fellow and an expert shot with the left hand. He was intensely eager for a tussle with the wild boars in the mountains. At the hotel there appeared also Jaunez' master huntsman, a dried-up, lean, wall-eyed type of a dog-tender. A «slave-beater» I would rather call him. I never saw him after this trip, and do not believe that he remained long in Jaunez' service.

The huntsman had arrived a few days in advance, with the dogs, the hunting equipment, and provisions, and had already sent most of it up to the mountains. We were bound for a small out-farm, the «Chalet Doron,» up in the Reichacker Mountains, about four or five miles above Stosswihr. The owner of the chalet met us in Stosswihr, but he and Jaunez' servant, Monsieur Edward, together with a helper, whom the owner of the chalet had hired in one of the villages, had seen to it that the dogs and the luggage were half a day ahead of us. We would probably overtake them in the forest somewhere. The

Digitized by Google

first couple of miles we could make by automobile; after that sleighs or skis, according to preference.

I want to mention and to emphasize that we now were in the immediate neighborhood of the front. The slope of the Fecht Valley, which we were to ascend, was at that moment—and had been for eight or nine months—securely held by the French. From the beginning of the war until April, 1915, this region had been the scene of fierce combats, but the French retained the advantage. Farther south the fighting continued with constantly increasing intensity and with shifting success, and here Hartmannswillerkopf, 956 meters high, halfway between Colmar and Mulhouse, for months had been the object of some of the hottest and bloodiest encounters that the World War had to show. From the 26th of March, 1915, the «*vieil Armand*»—this was the French soldiers' designation of «Hartmannswillerkopf»—had been in French possession. The fighting still continued on the east slope of the hill, and from our hunting-lodge up in the forest we could still, every night, see the flashes from the guns, and hear the infernal din of the bombardment around «Old Armand.» Soldiers swarmed on the highways, in all the taverns—everywhere.

But it is not of the war itself that I am about to tell. We have heard enough about it already. I men-

Digitized by Google

tion it only as a background for the story of the shoemaker.

The shoemaker. . . . We met him at a halting-place up in the forest, halfway between Stasswihr and the chalet from which our hunting was to start. We caught up with our «vanguard» there. And the «chief»—if I may so call him—of this «vanguard» was none other than the shoemaker Tiboust. It was neither Jaunez' servant, Monsieur Edward, nor Collin, the owner of the chalet: it was the helper, the temporarily engaged huntsman and all-around man, the «gentleman» completely unknown to Jaunez, to me, and to all the rest, except the owner of the chalet —le sieur Jean Jacques de Tiboust, who was in command of our vanguard. He announced clearly his four appellations in introducing himself to me outside the fence. I was startled when I heard the name, and no less startled as I looked at the man.

I believe he was the ugliest man I have ever seen. If I were to make a suitable comparison, I would say he resembled a gorilla. Not very tall, heavy-set, broad-shouldered, with unnaturally long arms ending in a pair of hands the equal of which would be hard to find. They were paws, rafts, shovels. His clenched fist might be compared with a huge flatiron, an anvil, an ore-compressor under high pressure. And the face was in harmony with the rest of the body. Square,

Digitized by Google

rugged, and angular, with a jowl which reminded one of Mangin—the negro general with the iron jaw. He had a shock of reddish-brown hair. But what first of all drew one's attention was his unbalanced gait. One of his legs was much shorter than the other. Consequently, when he walked his head swung over to the right, describing an arc of about forty degrees. When he walked fast he swayed and rolled like a warped and twisted millwheel.

I asked the huntsman where and how he had picked up this new helper. But he shook his head and referred me to the peasant Collin. And as we trudged up the long, steep hills, ascending the valley of the Fecht, the owner of the chalet told me some things about the queer fellow with the high-sounding name, who was part of our escort. Tiboust, however, gave a good account of himself and was a useful and handy man. His special job was to look after the dogs. And this was needed, for we had no less than four of them—two deerhounds, one bird dog, and one beagle. We did not dare to let them loose yet, and thus Tiboust took charge of the whole pack. I noticed that he was kind to the dogs, but he seemed to have some difficulty with one of them, the larger of the deerhounds, a big, long-shanked animal; his name was Rack. Rack was too restless when leashed and constantly got his chain entwined with those of the other

Digitized by Google

dogs. This made Tiboust angry and he let drive at the dog with a whip several times. But he always saw to it that the dogs were well fed, and when we reached the chalet he fixed up a stall for them in the stable, provided plenty of straw and blankets for their bedding, thus furnishing them with comfortable quarters.

Collin had become acquainted with Tiboust in the village down below, where he, Tiboust, a few months ago had established himself as shoemaker. He was not from Stosswihr, his home before the war being at Donnemarie, in an intensely German neighborhood. But he would not be a German, and so, like thousands of others, he escaped over the frontier into France on the day the war broke out. He was unmarried, alone in the world, and had only himself to provide for. By profession he was a shoemaker. And so he landed by accident in the town of Stosswihr early in August, 1914. At that time all Alsace was in chaos and disorder. The only thing anybody knew with certainty was that the Germans were on the march and that hell was loose upon the earth.

And now came Jean Tiboust's great adventure. It sounds quite incredible, but this cripple, this lame shoemaker, with one short and one long leg, was a full-blown sportsman! That is, he wanted to be a sportsman. Nothing in the world interested him so much as sport and physical exercise. All kinds, espe-

Digitized by Google

cially those requiring legs in good condition! Of course he was a man of gigantic strength, with a torso like an ox, and arms like the gnarled limbs of an oak. Had he only confined himself to throwing the hammer or putting the shot, or even to boxing, his interest might have been rewarded, for as a bruiser and slugger he could have held his own. But his greatest delight was running and jumping. This was the field in which he would stake everything to excel, to establish a record, to gain a reputation. Some men are that way.

His great adventure came. How it happened he hadn't a clear notion. But the fact is that when the war broke out, when the Germans descended upon Alsace like a swarm of locusts, Jean Jacques de Tiboust was accepted for army service. He reported as volunteer and passed the test. And it is to be noted that he was accepted not as shoemaker, craftsman, or one of those fellows of no account, mobilized for home service far back of the front. No, Tiboust was accepted as *combattant,* full-fledged soldier, as a *poilu* at the very front. That was the greatest day in his life.

As a soldier in the line of combat Jean Jacques de Tiboust had accomplished wonders. It was thus reported, and with some degree of reliability. He had fought the Germans like a lion, leading the attack whenever he could. Especially during the storming of

Digitized by Google

Hartmannswillerkopf in March, when the French in the course of a few hours forced their way up the slope, and finished by taking the blockhouse at the top. It was an unparalleled butchery. Eight hundred German corpses were gathered together in and around the blockhouse, but the French losses, too, had been terrible. Two entire regiments entered the attack on «Old Armand.» After the victory whole companies were found to be wiped out—nearly so, at any rate. But Jean Jacques de Tiboust didn't have a scratch. And yet, some affirmed that he had been the first Frenchman to enter the blockhouse. He had stood, balanced on his long leg, on top of the wall, furiously brandishing a rifle in one hand and a tricolor in the other. He himself did not say much about his participation in the attack. Well, yes, he had been along. There had been a race to see who should get to the top first—«*On les a eus!* We got them, I should say so!»

But it is queer how things turn out!

Three months after the affair at Hartmannswillerkopf, Tiboust was demobilized! He no longer wore a uniform. He walked about the streets of Stosswihr dressed in ordinary civilian clothes. It was reported that he was still under orders and liable to service at one of the shoemaker shops maintained by the state in that vicinity. But nobody had seen him there; he

Digitized by Google

was ever to be seen on the streets or in saloons and slovenly drinking-places about town. And then people began to talk about him. Certain ones, the best informed, had heard that after the reorganization of the forces in Alsace, hundreds of «supernumeraries» were dropped from the ranks of first-line combatants and put to work at useful, equally useful, civilian jobs back of the line. Of course, the strain on the firing line in Alsace was much less at this time; it was farther north, in Champagne, and over along the Belgian coast, that the big drives were launched. The victory of Hartmannswillerkopf had strengthened the positions in Alsace, and the front here stiffened into a line which on the whole remained unchanged until the last months of the war, September and October, 1918. Now, that was one explanation. And it was perhaps the correct one.

But another rumor was circulated about Tiboust's disappearance at the front. The word «degradation» was whispered. Nobody knew who had spoken it first, but it seems that the tongue of Grandjean, the blacksmith, had been active in the matter. He was in the same battalion as Tiboust and did not pretend to hide that the shoemaker did not exactly come up to the reports about him. No, quite the contrary. In the battalion it was an open secret that Jean Jacques was the most cowardly wretch that had ever put on a

Digitized by Google

uniform. He was simply *froussard,* a coward, whom it was a shame to keep in the company. Not once only, but at least three times Tiboust had shown his heels to the enemy. Grandjean had a nasty tongue and used expressions which cannot be reproduced in print; but he had the laugh on his side when he told how Tiboust «displayed» his cowardice, and how Tiboust turned «yellow» when the time for the attack came. And the blacksmith Grandjean succeeded in fastening upon Tiboust the nickname of *froussard.* The coward from Donnemarie—the fellow whom they had to send back from the front.

One day at the chalet—we were on skis that day—I happened to mention to Tiboust that I was from Norway. At once he warmed up and became, *Mon Dieu!* how talkative, for quite a while! «*Ah, les norvégiens, les skieurs norvégiens!*» Indeed he knew them! Hadn't he six or eight years ago, when the «*roi des skieurs de Norvège*» was giving a course of instructions for the Alpine Chasseurs, down by Briançon,—hadn't he been one of the first to take up the sport, to catch the Norwegian's wonderful «style,» his leaps and turns! Look here, the Telemark turn, and Tiboust—for he was also on skis—executed the most elegant Telemark turn that one could imagine. I was quite impressed. Later I was told that he had also participated in a long-distance run by civilians, which

Digitized by Google

the Norwegian instructor had arranged in the neighborhood of Briançon. Tiboust did not remember the name of the Norwegian «Ski King»;—I suggested Major Qvale and Durban-Hansen and Trygve Smith, but all he could remember was that the instructor talked a broken French, but was a *merveil* in both jumping and running. In the long-distance run Tiboust had taken the eighth prize! He had used then, as now, one long and one short ski, the latter about like a fair-sized snowshoe. He used this on the short leg, braced himself for a good take-off, and glided along with incredible swiftness on the long ski, while his right leg and the snowshoe hung dangling in the air.

When Tiboust talked about skis or went along on a ski-run, he thawed out and was good-natured and merry. But otherwise he was strangely silent and uncommunicative. I could not quite like him. There was something about his eyes. His face might have the expression of a child, but it might also have an animal look. I cannot forget his eyes. There seemed to be a gleam of phosphorus in them.

It was not pleasant to note that he also became more and more brutal in his treatment of the dog Rack. There had gradually developed a state of war between them. It had started on the way up, and there on the mountain it became wörse each day. He treated the other dogs well, but beat Rack and gave him very

Digitized by Google

little food. And Rack on his side became more and more snappish toward his keeper.

We had separated into two parties. On one side Jaunez and I hunted, with the owner of the chalet, Collin, as guide, and Tiboust, who carried the provisions. I have never seen such ability to carry a heavy burden undaunted for eight or ten hours at a stretch. I had noticed this the very first day. When we caught up with him upon the ridge, he was carrying a huge sack on his back. Goodness knows what was in it! Not any of our things, surely. It looked as if he had equipped himself for a sojourn in the mountains the rest of the winter. He did not let go of the sack until we were settled, and then he hid it carefully. In the other party were Lieutenant Deville and the huntsman, with Jaunez' servant and the son of Collin, a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old boy.

About the hunting itself there is not much to tell. I was rather disappointed in it, for I have had much more wonderful hunting trips here at home. We shot a few hares, a few birds, but this was certainly not worth the long trip. The adventure came the day we shot the wild boar, though not even then was hunting the chief event.

We had tracked the boar, or rather boars, for there were two of them, the fourth day, over on a tract of marshy ground beyond the ridge. Jaunez and I found

Digitized by Google

the tracks in the forenoon—apparently two lusty specimens. But out there in the marshes where the snow had almost disappeared or dissolved into slush, it was not easy to follow the tracks. The boars had plodded forth and back over the bogs, and it was difficult to make out what direction they had taken. At noontime we halted and sent Collin home to the chalet to find the other hunting party and the other deerhound. We were dissatisfied with both Tiboust and Rack that day. Tiboust was in dangerous humor, taciturn and ugly, and instead of helping and encouraging the dog during our search, he rather annoyed him, letting him loose and pulling him in at the wrong places! Now and then he cursed and whipped him. Both he and the dog were irritable and snappish. They watched each other with ugly looks, and in the meantime the tracks of the wild boars were still unsolved. It would be best to wait until the others came up.

We sat on a knoll smoking our pipes, after having finished our breakfast. Rack was tied to a tree near by. Jaunez and I spoke in English in order to exchange our ideas at ease. Jean Jacques de Tiboust sat like a sphinx close by. Suddenly Rack rose upon his hind legs and bayed as if crazy, pulling violently at his chain—three, four jerks—and there we saw the

Digitized by Google

dog, with his chain broken, running at a furious speed over the marsh. We watched the direction he took, and there, in the thicket over yonder, on the other side, two enormous boars were stirring. We started as if electrified! Not a word was spoken, but each one seized his gun lying close at hand. The range was considerable, but we felt that we had to shoot. To try to run toward them across the marsh would have been senseless. Either—or! And so Jaunez and I remained lying, and emptied the contents of our gun chambers in the direction of the boars. And now happened what often may happen on such occasions—we both aimed at the same animal. At any rate, we came to that conclusion afterward. For suddenly—though somewhat late in the firing—we noticed that one of the animals dropped to the ground, while the other, galloping furiously, disappeared in the grove. We started off in hot haste. Tiboust was already far out in the marsh. The rest of us ran after, straining every effort.

As we reached the animal, we witnessed a ghastly performance. The beast—a full grown male with a pair of enormous, curved tusks—was mortally wounded but still alive. Rack had reached the boar and pounced upon it with indomitable fury. Bristles and hair were flying about them. And then we also

Digitized by Google

caught sight of Tiboust arriving about a hundred meters ahead of us. He ran, limped, rolled with cyclonic speed toward the struggling animals. And as he reached them we saw him leap forward on his long leg with the furious impetus of a football-player striving for a final touchdown, and with the short leg give Rack a kick so violent that it would have sent a hundred other creatures into eternity. Rack flew like a ball clear over the body of the boar, and fell like a dead mass on the other side. At the same moment Tiboust hurled himself upon the neck of the wounded beast. He might be compared to a jaguar seizing his prey by the throat. His long hunting-knife flashed like lightning and plunged into the neck of the wild boar. The shapeless, ugly head of the animal rolled forward. The tusks bore deep into the ground. As we came up we beheld Tiboust lying full length upon the beast, with his arms clasped tightly about its neck. He drank, sucking with a loud gurgling sound the blood as it poured from the gaping wound in the beast's throat.

I shall not make this scene longer than necessary. First of all we had to tie up Rack. He was lame, but utterly wild and unmanageable. I am still unable to explain how we got him chained. While this was going on the other party came up. There were no con-

Digitized by Google

gratulations and no drinks in celebration of the kill. An uncomfortable feeling had come upon us all. Tiboust seemed to have fallen into a state of calm. He seemed dull, apathetic; he did not utter a word on the entire home journey. The huntsman took charge of Rack. Tiboust kept himself far in the rear as we walked down the slope.

Our evening at the chalet was anything but pleasant. The episode up in the woods had strongly affected some of us, and the infection caught the rest. However, the chalet was as comfortable as anyone might wish. The inner guest-room was taken by Jaunez, Deville, and myself. The rest of the party had settled down in the large, roomy kitchen. Here they both cooked and slept. «*A la guerre comme à la guerre!*» Up to this time we had found everything most satisfactory, but this evening our spirits were lagging. Tiboust had gone to bed as soon as the supper was over. The rest of us stayed up, and we invited the huntsman and Collin to our room. We talked low and cautiously, and each had his own opinion. But Collin disclosed one thing which I at least made note of. I have already mentioned Grandjean, the blacksmith from Stosswihr, who had nothing good to say about Tiboust. And Collin told us that Grandjean's talk could not blacken Tiboust's reputation, for Grandjean was a

Digitized by Google

questionable character, a bum and a braggart, known for his conquests of feminine hearts. He was a non-commissioned cavalry officer—a strong, robust fellow. They said that he was irresistible. And now he had picked out Geraldine. Geraldine was the pretty waitress in the café on the corner. Oh yes, it was Geraldine's turn this time. And many hearts ached. People said, too, that shoemaker Tiboust had become a steady customer of the corner café for no other reason than to be able to sit and look at the pretty waitress, who so kindly and good-naturedly tried to please all. But naturally there was not much hope for the shoemaker, poor fellow. He wasn't exactly an Adonis. Nor was he a cavalry officer. And now he wasn't even allowed to wear the uniform. A common soldier, discarded and degraded on account of his conduct *en face de l'ennemi.*

We sat listening to Collin's talk. The moonlight seeped in upon us through the uncurtained window-panes. Over the snowy landscape arched a cloudless winter sky sprinkled with stars. On the other side of the Fecht Valley thundered the cannon from the French batteries, the distant roar penetrating the walls and striking us as we sat there around the table. There might be a sudden renewal of fighting this evening. Perhaps the Germans were planning a new

Digitized by Google

attack here along the Vosges? There was silence around the table.

Suddenly a fearful scream cut the air. A cry, a howl—a mingling of animal and human voices—an inarticulate din so devilish, so piercing, that it seemed to cut into our very bones. The howls and screams came from the yard outside. We jumped from our seats and rushed first to the windows, then out through the door. Every one of us.

Though I live to be a hundred years, I shall never forget the sight that met us. There in the yard, whirling in a satanic witches' dance, were Tiboust and Rack engaged in deadly combat, for a moment jammed together, then separated. Round and round, down, up again, now the man on top, now the beast. The snow was trampled and sprinkled with blood. The light was almost like day. The bright moon flooded the space between the houses. Above us the sky, clear and bright with stars; the woods round about us silent and hushed. But back and forth in the yard, circling from one side to the other, continued the dance of death, and both man and beast screamed, howled like jackals. Within the stable the other dogs chimed in. The whole clearing around the chalet seemed to be filled with the beastly chorus.

We remained standing, incapable of motion, as if

Digitized by Google

nailed to the spot, bewitched by the sight and sound. Could we believe our eyes, or was the whole thing an hallucination? The man tumbling about in the yard—Tiboust! That body, those legs—no mistake was possible. But what in the world was the matter with him? And the man was in uniform! He wore a corporal's full-dress uniform, epaulettes, cartridge-belt, and bayonet dangling at his side! How long the fight lasted I do not know. Suddenly we saw Tiboust crouching; he had firm hold and was pulling. He had finally gotten a grip on the dog's jaws. His hulking figure looked as big as an ox. He bent over slowly, braced himself with his short leg. Then he straightened up; his paws had found what they sought. A jerk! His arms flew apart as when a tree is split by lightning. A snap—a rattling sound—and the dog lay dead at his feet.

Tiboust stamped with his bad leg on the dead body of the dog. He foamed at the mouth, his eyes burned, and he gesticulated wildly. Then he pointed at the corpse and yelled: «*Eh, voilà enfin—Hindenburg mort!*» («There is Hindenburg—dead at last!») And in ecstasy he continued: «I have just killed him. I killed him with my bare hands! *Cette bête farouche!* I tore him to pieces—*comme ça!*» And he repeated with his hands the gesture he had made at the mo-

Digitized by Google

ment of killing the dog. Then he came two paces forward, raising his hands toward us as if suppliantly, piteously, begging:

«*Est-ce que je ne mérite pas maintenant redevenir soldat de France?*»

(«Am I not now worthy of again becoming a soldier of France?»)

Then he collapsed, fell prostrate, and remained lying like a bundle on the snow, barely five steps distant from the dog.

As we carried him in he sobbed like a child.

We put him down near the fireplace and gradually he became calm. He sat and looked into the flames, raked the hot coals with a poker. Now and then he uttered a word, part of a sentence, which seemed to indicate that he imagined himself at the front, in the midst of the firing line again. He no longer looked dangerous. And the huntsman hid his revolver.

We held a council of war in the guest-room. The hunt was over. There would be no fun in continuing any longer. Our only concern was how to spend the night. Tiboust would have to be watched and looked after somehow, though he was quiet and apparently harmless.

Suddenly Collin's son put his head into the doorway and whispered that Tiboust had skipped out

Digitized by Google

again. He took nothing with him except the small steel rod with which he had been stirring the fire.

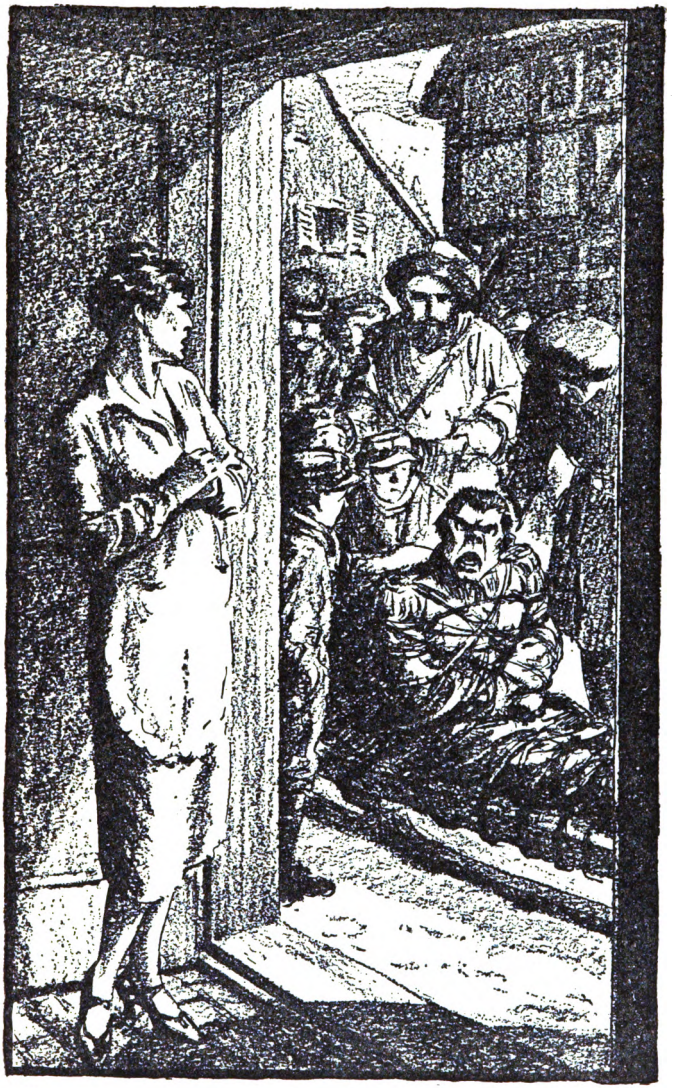
We rushed out again. The door to the stable was open and through it issued piteous howls of dogs in pain. Bent over the edge of the bin where the dogs were lying stood Tiboust, furiously stabbing at our other staghound—stabbing and branding with the red-hot poker.

As we rushed in he turned his head. His face was convulsed with a demoniacal smirk, his eyes gleamed as if in anticipation: «Hush!» he said, and waved us away. «Hush! *Attendez une seconde!* (Wait a second!) *Maintenant c'est le tour de Guillaume!*—» (Now it is Kaiser William's turn!) And again he stabbed with the red-hot iron into the bin where the dog lay. There was an odor of burning flesh.

Then we threw him down. Five of us seized and tied him with a rope.

We freighted him on a sled the next morning when we went down to the village. He was still rebellious and we had to tie him to the sled. He prattled continually about Hindenburg and Emperor William. We had tried to have him change back into civilian garb. But he protested so energetically and so violently that we decided it would be more sensible not

Digitized by Google



«Keep your quartermaster, Geraldine! Keep him, just keep him, I tell you!»

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

to excite him again. He begged especially to be allowed to keep the cartridge-belt and the epaulettes, and on this matter he would not yield. He mumbled something to the effect that later in the day he was to receive the cross of the Legion of Honor, and of course he would have to appear in full-dress uniform! To us it was most important to get started, and so we let him put on whatever trappings he liked. Like a fat pig he lay, tied and bound on the sled. It was a gloomy procession.

When we reached Stosswihr he begged imploringly that we would take him to the Rue Félix Faure. We did not understand why, but humored him in this, for it was a side street with relatively little traffic. On a street corner he became restless and had the horse stopped. It was on the corner of the Café du Cercle. Naturally a crowd soon gathered about the sled, people appeared at the windows and doorways. Tiboust looked around, raised himself halfway to a sitting posture, as if to survey the surroundings, searched the Café du Cercle. «That's good!» he shouted, suddenly. A girl wearing the apron of a waitress stood in the doorway. Instantly his eyes lighted with the glow of insanity. Suddenly he tugged desperately at the ropes and screamed:

«Keep your quartermaster, Geraldine! Keep him,

Digitized by Google

just keep him, I tell you! *Garde ton maréchal de logis, Geraldine!*» And then he added—with a triumphant expression on his face: «*Moi—je suis maréchal de France!*» («I am a marshal of France!»)

Ten minutes later we brought him to the military ambulance depot.

I have not much more to tell about the «Coward from the Vosges Mountains.» Now and then I have inquired of Monsieur Jaunez how Tiboust fared later. He was in an asylum for a couple of years, looked upon as dangerous to public safety. Later he seemed to have recovered, and was released provisionally. He stood the test and now he is on top. He lives in Stosswihr and everybody knows him. He has even become something like a local hero. The authorities have found proof in black and white that his conduct at the front was in perfect order. He *was* the first Frenchman to go over the top at Hartmannswillerkopf! A medal was long ago conferred on him, and the people of Stosswihr and Alsace respect and honor him. They have obtained free lodging for him in a shell-damaged railway coach on a sidetrack in the outskirts of town. Tiboust is the shoemaker *à la mode* at present. He is and will remain a bachelor. But he is always in uniform—in that of an Alpine Chas-

Digitized by Google

seur with corporal's distinctions—for which he has received special permission from the authorities.

Now his attacks come only once a month, and he is chained only one day at a time. When he feels them coming he shuts the iron door and ties himself up.

Digitized by Google

I Stood Looking at My Own Corpse

BEFORE the war I was afraid of a corpse; I had hardly seen a dead human body until after the battle of the Marne, but my experiences there and in the four following years at the front would make one callous to almost anything, and the sight of corpses seemed less ghastly. It was not death which provoked fear out there—more horrible was the fate that might lie in wait for one between the lines, that might burst from an exploding mine, that might come whistling through the air; the thought of walking or sitting as a cripple the rest of one's life, the wreck of a man, an object of pity, needing the help of others. Compared with such a fate death seemed a comparatively simple and easy matter. The dead bodies became mere forms of earth; the cadavers of horses often were more shocking to look at than the corpses of soldiers. Everything was matter in different degrees of dissolution. Thus war dulled our nerves and often left us devoid of feeling.

The thought of death usually left us cold. But not always. Ah, no, not always! Often have I walked

Digitized by Google

across fields strewn with dead and quailed in terror. And once—it was only a single dead body, but that one moment would I least of all live through again—that short minute when I stood looking at my own corpse on the submarine dock at Zeebrügge on the Belgian coast.

It happened on Sunday, October 20, 1918, about ten o'clock in the forenoon.

The breakdown of the German front in France had begun. Foche, appointed generalissimo of all the Allied armies, had finally taken the offensive, and was hammering the German iron front from the Swiss frontier to the coast of Belgium. From the middle of July, more exactly the 18th of July, 1918, battle followed upon battle, from near Paris, from Ourcq and the Marne to Vesle and Reims, then on to the Oise and Soissons, then north and east, always pushing back the Germans, who now knew hardly a day's respite between new offensives on the part of the Allies. The second battle of the Marne had again, this time definitely, decided Germany's fate in the World War. No longer were the Germans advancing, but they were retreating. Mobile warfare had suddenly started again after the four years' fearful siege warfare in the trenches. Foch rolled up one German army after the other. The bomb-proof Hindenburg

Digitized by Google

line, one kilometer deep, was taken by storm in a three days' attack, and in the course of a couple of months the other impregnable German lines of defense, prepared during the last two years, fell, one after the other. The Herman, Hunding, Brünhilde, and Krimhilde positions, and all the other positions, whatever might be their names, where the Germans fought desperately to win peace, when they no longer could hope to win the war. Foch's strategy and the Allies' unlimited reserves of men and material could not be resisted. The Germans fell back again and again. Toward the middle of October their front in Flanders began to waver; Armentières, Roubaix, Tourcoing were taken; in northern France the Allies threatened to pierce their center, but on their right wing the Germans still clung with the energy of despair to the priceless strongholds on the Belgian coast, the submarine bases, from which they threatened the Channel and the very heart of the Island Kingdom. These were the last «pawns» that the Germans would yield. If they could hold them, there was still hope of a hearing on their proposition of a «peace with understanding.» Here, too, they failed. On October 14th, the Belgian, English, and French troops, supported by guns from the British navy, advanced along the entire north front and seized Roulers; on the 15th, Commines and Menin, with 12,000 prisoners and 120

Digitized by Google

guns, fell into the hands of the Allies. And then came October 17th, «black Thursday,» when the English General Birdwood, at the head of his troops, entered Lille, the «capital» of northern France, and thereby opened a breach through which the Allies could attack the German lines in Belgium from the rear. The entire German right flank was in danger of being rolled back, caught in a trap, or pushed into the sea; every hour was bringing the crisis nearer. From the south the Belgians swung forward in fan-shaped formation and swept their own coasts clear again toward the north. On the very same Thursday, October 17th, the Germans gave up Ostende and fifty other towns and villages along the sandbanks facing the Channel, and two days later King Albert and his troops marched into Bruges and Zeebrügge—the notorious submarine nest on the coast of Flanders, the enemy's strongest point of support in Belgium. Along the whole coast, clear to the Dutch frontier, the Germans were in a retreat which resembled flight. By forced marches the imperial battalions rushed back over the same roads over which, a little more than four years before, they had come like a flood. But now their faces were turned toward Germany. No longer «*nach Paris*.» This time their banners did not flutter in the breeze, and the German eagles were packed into cases in the baggage-wagons. Defeat—

Digitized by Google

la débâcle—had clipped their wings. «*Kaputt—kaputt!*»

This introduction may be long, but it is nevertheless necessary to the understanding of what follows. It is to be hoped that it will also explain the feelings of the group of war correspondents to which I belonged, who had the almost unique opportunity of accompanying the Allied northern armies in those never-to-be-forgotten days of victory.

From Foch's headquarters, Château de Bombon, Count de Segonzac's castle near Normant in the Department of the Seine and Marne—that strange red «house of silence» from which Foch directed the Allied offensive during the months of July to October, 1918—we had received special permission to go north and to follow the advance as close to the line of combat as would be consistent with safety. We were a delegation of six journalists—two Americans, one Brazilian, a Spaniard, a Dutchman, and myself. I believe I may say that what we experienced during the last thirteen or fourteen days of October will remain for all of us as the most memorable and most wonderful of all the thrilling, dramatic, and impressive episodes that the four long years of the war had presented to us. In two gigantic armored automobiles from headquarters, with Captain Gouin as leader—*chef de la mission provisoire des journalistes neutres*

Digitized by Google

au G. Q. G. A.—we «flew» from place to place. Sometimes we were immediately in the rear, but sometimes right in the midst of masses of British French, and Belgian troops, who formed the terrible sledge-hammer, with which Foch crushed the German resistance and beat back the enemy along the entire front. We followed the armies of the north. From Arras to the sea. We were in Lens, in Arras, in Hazebrouck, in Ypres. We arrived at Lille a few hours after General Birdwood at the head of detachments of the 5th British Army had entered the city.

We remember, too, his incomparably beautiful act of halting his troops for an hour outside the city, in order to give a detachment of French soldiers time to catch up, thus granting them the joy and honor of being the first to enter the tortured and starving city. We remember the demonstrations, the Lillois, by the tens of thousands, all along the line of march, shouting and weeping for gratitude and joy for the hour of deliverance that had finally come. We remember the French airplane which suddenly landed on the market place, and the aviator who jumped out—the mayor's son! come home to see his father, a prisoner for four years in his own city. We remember—but the memories are coming too fast! I might relate hundreds of things, but my real story is—Zeebrügge.

Belgium! the liberated Belgium! Belgium free

Digitized by Google

once more!—A cry of joy seemed to meet us from the land, the people, the sea, as we drove on over the shell-torn, lacerated, ragged patches of the reconquered land. The yoke of four years was being cast off. Call us the «hyenas of victory,» us the reporters, who greedily followed in the tracks of the soldiers, but your scorn is as nothing compared with the joy of having been the witnesses of a liberation, a «resurrection,» like than of Belgium during the days of October, 1918. We saw it at close range.

In the course of the afternoon of October 17th the victorious advance of the group of armies in Flanders between the North Sea and the river Lys had brought decisive results for the liberation of the entire Belgian coast. Since the Belgian army steadily pushed forward along the main road from the south toward Bruges, and since at the same time the French troops were approaching Thielt, the Germans had no choice but to evacuate Ostende, which was on the point of being surrounded. The city was immediately occupied by Belgian infantry, while at the same time English and French monitors speeded in from the sea and lay alongside the quays. At that same hour King Albert's cavalry reached the gates of Bruges, and the day after, the king himself rode into the city. Early in the morning of the following day, Saturday, October 19th, the Germans hastily evacuated

Digitized by Google

Zeebrügge, a suburb of Bruges by the sea, and tried to retreat some kilometers farther north near the neutral Dutch frontier. The same afternoon, Saturday, we were allowed to drive into Zeebrügge. The houses which the retreating regiments had fired were still burning. We heard the rumbling of the German baggage-trucks from the roads north toward Heyst.

Never shall I forget the sight of the wretched, violated Belgian coast—bristling with cannon, casemates, mines, and barbed-wire fences. Here in the days of peace, on the wonderful mile-long beach from Panne to the north of Zeebrügge, had been developed the finest bathing-resort in Europe. Now this Belgian Riviera, the «Children's Paradise» resembled a hell on earth. The Germans, fearing most of all the attacks from the sea, had protected themselves in a manner which in thoroughness and scientific expertness surpassed even the colossal defenses on their inland front. At Zeebrügge, on a stretch of thirty kilometers, they had built up the sand dunes to form a work of fortifications, where cannon of every caliber were placed so close together that we literally touched a gun on each side as we walked between them with arms outstretched. As they began their retreat, the Germans, as thoroughly as was possible in their hurry, had blown up and demolished all these cement and steel-lined sand burrows and ridges from which hun-

Digitized by Google

dreds upon hundreds of cannon and machine-guns pointed toward the sea. Since the evacuation had been carried out in such panicky haste, nothing could be taken along. During the previous night, therefore, the Germans had dynamited the casemates, gun emplacements, and the machine-gun nests. Cement blocks, large as houses, demolished guns, steel plates, telegraph poles, chevaux-de-frise, and barbed-wire netting lay pell-mell in wild chaos from the shore line far inland. The road inside the jetty was impassable, useless also because of the risk of being blown into the air by countless unexploded mines which the Germans had placed as a possible «annoyance» to their pursuers.

We went along, looking at this «abomination of desolation,» while the smoke from the burning buildings mixed with the fog setting in from the sea and melted into the low gray clouds, making the cold, wet October afternoon seem inexpressibly gloomy and depressing. We went down to the harbor and looked at the mole, which had been blown up by the English during their insanely foolhardy naval attack upon Zeebrügge. The Germans have tried to belittle this exploit, claiming that it was an utter failure. We saw on the spot proofs to the contrary. The entire World War can hardly produce a more courageous, more hazardous, and more glorious exploit than this

Digitized by Google

fantastic attack of the British navy upon the most important German submarine base at daybreak on St. George's Day, 1918. The story of Vice-Admiral Keyes and his crew of volunteers will live on the lips of sailors as long as manly courage and willingness to sacrifice oneself are regarded as praiseworthy qualities. On board the cruiser *Vindictive* they steamed straight again the death-dealing row of thousands of German cannon. The admiral manœuvred his ship close up to the mole, whereupon his bluejackets rushed down upon the quay and in the midst of a hellish fire from the entire German artillery held their ground for more than an hour in a furious hand-to-hand combat with the onrushing German garrison. They succeeded in blowing up or setting fire to enormous stores of war material which were deposited there. They succeeded in pushing three war vessels laden with cement clear into the canal from Bruges and sinking them there, so that the German U-boat raiders inside were bottled up. Two British submarines loaded to the limit with explosives were then steered against the viaduct, the most important point of the mole, and blown up. Finally the British squadron withdrew in good order, leaving the Union Jack waving over the mole in the face of the enemy.

I quote verbatim from my notes, hastily scribbled during our visit to the harbor: «I am down on the

Digitized by Google

long pier, the mole, in front of the canal to the sea. Out by the entrance lies the *Groenlo* (*Thetis*), blocking the way; farther in, the *Iphigenia* and the *Intrepid*. Farther north, an English mine-sweeper and a German boat sunk near the mole. *The entrance is blocked*. The large English ship reaches twelve to fifteen yards above the water.»

At about the same time that we drove into Zeebrügge, a couple of French monitors and a powerful English naval squadron had put in alongside of the mole, and the Union Jack again flew over the glorious remains of two of the British navy's proudest cruisers. The harbor was swarming with marine troops. From the city, battalion after battalion of Belgian infantry started north by forced marches, hoping they might still overtake the German coast guards, cut off their retreat to Ecloo and Ghent, or drive them across the Dutch frontier, where they would be disarmed and interned: «*Hallali approche pour le boche!*» said our French guide. «*Hallali*» is the finish when an animal is dying and the hunters blow the horn.

As we stood on the boulevard facing the sea, wondering in what direction we would be most likely to find suitable lodgings for the night, a man came running toward us dressed in civilian clothes, without hat or overcoat. «*Ils sont partis!*» he shouted, excitedly.

Digitized by Google

(«They have gone!»). «*Et voilà ma maison!*» («And look, there is my house!»)

He gesticulated wildly and pointed to a building directly facing the shore promenade, quite close to where we were standing.

«Who are you, sir?» asked Captain Gouin. «I am the owner of this hotel; the house is mine and it is still standing!» chattered the man. Spinning around like a top, he seized each of us in turn by the collar and kept on pointing. «Come in with me, gentlemen, and be my witnesses to how they have left it!» urged he. And before we realized it we were escorting the fellow toward the entrance of his house.

It was a red brick house of three stories, with a lot of gimcracks on the outside—ugly, over-decorated, almost in Nuremberg style. Above the door was a sign, «Hotel Mayerhaus.»

And thus began, accidentally and aimlessly, our inspection of this remarkable house. We entered through a swinging door, and then went past a wind screen into a large, quite handsome hall, with lobby, cloakroom, telephone booths, in fact everything ordinarily pertaining to a well-equipped hotel. But the extraordinary thing about it was that in the center of the hall floor, on a solid foundation of granite and cement, was mounted a well-polished German navy gun, 130 mm. caliber, pointing toward the sea, with

Digitized by Google

the muzzle set at an elevation calculated to fire through the swinging door or the window above it. Our host and guide turned pale with emotion when he caught sight of the cannon, but his excitement subsided as we passed through the building and ascertained that the house on the whole was quite unharmed, except, of course, the windows, which were all smashed, a couple of rooms in the third story, which were nearly torn off by a shell explosion, and numerous cracks and tears in the walls and the tapestry. The furniture was remarkably well preserved, the kitchen and dining-room splendidly equipped—everything indicated that German officers had inhabited the hotel during the occupation. In the pantry were fresh meat and a stock of delicatessen. The departure had evidently been hurried.

In the course of a very short time we had agreed that this was where we would spend the night. The next day's program was still uncertain—we hoped to be able to continue eastward to Antwerp. Everything depended on the resistance of the Germans and the swiftness of their retreat; but whether we returned to Ostende or Bruges for the night, our route would be longer. It would therefore be more sensible to remain where we were. We surely could not get better accommodations anywhere else; we had some provisions with us in the automobiles, and, anyhow, «à

Digitized by Google

la guerre comme à la guerre!» We were all sufficiently trained and eager for adventure, so that improvised lodgings right in the middle of things seemed to us attractive and tempting. We stayed.

And we certainly did not regret it. Monsieur Durand, the «proprietor,» turned out to be a splendid fellow, very kind and cheery. We learned that he had been on the watch right behind the Belgian front for the last two years, with the set purpose of being one of the first to rush in and take possession of his house as soon as the Germans should withdraw from the country which they had seized in so violent and contemptible manner. He himself was *chétif* (sickly and weak), and therefore not mobilized in the ordinary way. But he swore that in spite of his civilian status he had perhaps done his country greater service than many a soldier in uniform. We might perhaps imagine along what lines he had been useful. He had bought the Hotel Mayerhaus ten years ago from a German, and for strategic reasons he had retained the German name of the enterprise. Why, before the war there were swarms of German tourists and visitors to the bathing-beach in Zeebrügge. He confided to us that on the whole he was no mean strategist; but at the same time he was the best Belgian that King Albert could ever wish to see. If we only knew what problems he had solved for king and

Digitized by Google

country during the war, by dint of his numerous German connections and acquaintances from before the war. It was also not entirely without good reason that he was the first outsider to reach Zeebrügge before the Germans were out of the city. «But come this way, messieurs. I will prove to you, gentlemen, that I am the man I claim to be.»

And Monsieur Durand bade us accompany him up to the third story, to a room beside the two which had been demolished by the shell explosion. There was his proof.

When we got into the room, Monsieur Durand lay down on the floor and began to sight between the window in the corner and the fireplace on the middle wall. «It should be here,» said he, and he drove an ax violently down between the planks in the floor. He broke loose three or four planks, then pulled away a strip of cardboard beneath the planks, and a strange sight was unfolded before our eyes. Hundreds of bottles of various shapes and various colors were laid down in straight rows under the cardboard layer. A broad smile lighted up Monsieur Durand's face when the undamaged store of bottles was exposed. «*Spurlos versenkt*!—but not by U-boats or German guns!» said he, laughing, and handed some bottles to each of us. He found a small, green slender flask. «To the absent ones—the runaways!» said he, and chuckled

Digitized by Google

with a merry gurgling sound, echoed by the liquor as he poured it out. It was genuine French absinthe, the forbidden drink, proscribed in France before the war. It was the first time for many years that any of us had tasted the green poison. It had gained in aroma and strength after four years of undisturbed storage. On that day in October, four years before, when the German armies were approaching Zeebrügge, Durand had moved his wine supplies from the cellar to the third story, to the secret «loft» between the joists and the floor planks. His *ruse de guerre* had been successful. The Germans had walked for forty-eight months over his wine stores. No wonder that he was proud and happy to find it still untouched after such experience.

That evening spirits rose high in the dining-room at Hotel Mayerhaus. Neither fuel nor food was lacking, to say nothing of liquid warmth. We, the representatives of six nations, were at the moment strong for the idea of an unbreakable «League of Nations.» Later in the evening there was a good deal of singing and talking in favor of that sort of brotherhood, and due homage was rendered the heroes of the day in several languages. I am not one to scorn good food and would be reluctant to break up an enjoyable party. But fatigue overcame me at last, and at midnight I withdrew quietly. I had noticed during the

Digitized by Google

visit to the third floor a small room furnished with an iron bed on which were blankets, and Monsieur Durand, with a sweeping gesture, had assured us that the whole house was at our disposal. *Eh bien!* Our French chauffeurs were also in the hotel; they had helped in the kitchen, waited on the table, and now they sat in a side room, carousing, as we did, at the expense of Monsieur Durand. The agreement was that we should depart at nine o'clock the next morning.

I retired to the somewhat wabbly iron bed and was able, though tired, to finish my notes on that day's events. For a while I lay looking at the room in which I had landed. A small room with two doors, one leading to the corridor, another to the room damaged by the shell. It seemed more and more evident that the hotel which now was turned over to us had been inhabited by German officers or, maybe, non-commissioned officers. The bed linen in my room would indicate the former; the picture of Kaiser Wilhelm above the bed, a poorly finished show picture of the supreme war lord, with turned-up mustaches and all, might point to the latter. I kept pondering about this and about war and peace, defeat and victory, capable non-commissioned officers and incompetent superior officers, and human frailty in general. And then I slept. Sound and deep sleep. The last thing I heard was a distant but by no means soft droning of voices

Digitized by Google

from the dining-room. The voice of the American rumbled like a Niagara: «We'll win the World War! The United States of America of course! Go ahead, boys ——!»

I started suddenly; there was somebody in the room! I had slept, but how long? And I had forgotten to turn off the light. I sat up in bed and looked about me, dazed and confused. Where was I? Who was I? With drowsy eyes I beheld a vision. In front of my bed, in line with the door to the demolished room, stood a German soldier. *A German soldier!* I was panic-stricken! The whole thing was clear to me. While I had slept, while we had been eating and drinking, the Germans had returned, the fortunes of war had changed. Zeebrügge was again occupied! Now *we* were *kaputt*! I was on the point of shouting, «*Kamerad!*» the only German word I could remember in a hurry.

But something happened quicker than I could act: The man in front of me was trembling with fright; his limbs shook as if limp and loose of joint. First he fell on his knees, then he crawled; again he stood up, stretched out his arms: «*Um Gottes willen, mein Herr, machen Sie keine Anrufe!*» («For God's sake, sir, do not raise an alarm!») he groaned. His face was convulsed with terror. I looked at him. He was thin and starved; he staggered from weakness. He no

Digitized by Google

longer was a soldier, just a poor wretch of a man to be pitied.

In a second I had regained control of myself, but with an effort. My heart was still pounding from the shock. As if from a distance I heard my own voice; it was calm and clear and uttered a German as passable as I have ever put together since my most faultless schooldays. I sat quietly in bed and asked the man to sit down. I pitched aside the clothes lying on the chair, and I seem to remember that I shook hands with him. And there we sat, the German and I, in quiet conversation, half whispering, trying to clarify the situation confronting us.

The first sentence of his statement relieved my fears. The Germans were not back in Zeebrügge! He was not a deserter, but an involuntary straggler. By an unfortunate accident he had been left «hanging back» after his companions and the entire garrison had left the city. He had stood guard over the furnaces at the gas-works the previous night; it was a cruel job, and when he was relieved in the morning he was so tired and worn that instead of returning to the barracks he had simply crawled into a corner back of the boilers in the basement of the gas-works, where he found a sort of bed of straw and empty sacks, and it was nice and warm in there, and he had slept and slept, not waking up until about noon. But

Digitized by Google

«For God's sake, sir, do not raise an alarm!» he groaned.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

then the furnace-room was empty, the fire was out, and when he came up, no soldiers were in sight; they were all gone, and not a German was to be found anywhere. «I fainted from fear,» said he, «and afterward began to run; but after running awhile, I saw in the streets a terrible lot of Belgian soldiers who were marching in time, with a mounted officer in the lead, and then I understood at once what had happened.»

Poor fellow! He had wandered about like a hunted animal, sneaked from house to house, from door to door, completely at a loss as to what direction he ought to take. When evening came he stopped in a back yard in Prince Albert Street, and from a stairway there he saw, through the uncurtained windows, the lights in the Hotel Mayerhaus and a group of civilians sitting around a table eating and drinking. «It struck me at once that those gentlemen were not unkindly disposed,» said he, and so he had picked his way closer and closer to us. For on the streets outside were only soldiers and they were dangerous. For more than three hours he had lain under a sofa in the *salon* immediately adjoining the dining-room where we sat. He had heard every word of our conversation, but could not understand much of the foreign languages. He heard that one of the company retired at about midnight; he then had slipped into the corridor and had followed me. «I was close be-

Digitized by Google

hind you,» said he. «But now I have been shivering with cold for two hours out there»—he pointed to the door of the demolished room—«and I could stand it no longer. But you have *ein sehr gute Gesicht, mein Herr,*» said he. «And here I am. Do with me what you will, if only ——»

The fellow's story, his entire aspect, his apparently truthful and naïve account of what had happened to him, impressed me. He looked so forlorn and sad and desperate that I began to feel sorry for him. Yes, of course—he caught my idea at once, or perhaps it lay smoldering in his brains: If he could only find his own company, or catch up with any of the German troops, that was all he wanted. The war was ended; no one cared what would happen next. All he wanted was to get home, back to Germany. His parents, brothers, and sisters were living, their home was in a village near Hamburg. And as for the Belgians, he had nothing against them; on the contrary, he thought they had been treated a little too rough. But now everything would be put right, Belgium would again be freed, all nations would soon be friends, a powerful world religion was being formed with that in view, both in Russia and in Hamburg—that much he had been told lately in several letters from home. The sailors in the imperial navy had all become Chris-

Digitized by Google

tians, and in Hamburg and Kiel they had hoisted a large red flag marked by a cross.

He soon came round to what had been on his mind: If he could only get into civilian clothes, he would be safe! Then he would be sure of reaching his countrymen. In ordinary clothes he could cross the fields, and even walk on the highways—if he did not speak to anybody. He could walk and run fast, and in a day or so he would catch up with the German troops. His life depended on getting into civilian garb. If he were seen in uniform he would be shot like a dog! «How the Belgians must hate us! But I have surely done no harm; I have stretched telephone wires and taken care of horses, and now for a year I have been a fireman at the gas-works here. But let me have your clothes tonight, sir, and the Lord will bless you forever!»

Now it was my turn. I shall not use superfluous words. I fell for his petitions. If I only had not done so! At first I protested and expressed doubts that it would be of any use. However, he did not wait for my consent. Before I got that far he had begun to pull off his uniform, and he rejoiced at every garment of mine that fitted him. Their size was about right; the trousers and boots were perhaps a little too snug; he declined the socks, since the boots were somewhat tight, but his own high boots he would not dare use.

Digitized by Google

For safety's sake he put my socks in his pocket. The shirt, vest, and collar fitted him exactly. He emptied my vest pockets very carefully and laid the contents on the night table.

Thus far had we proceeded when a loud noise from the hall reached us. The party in the dining-room was breaking up, and the men were noisily making their way to bed. It was a question of finding rooms along the corridor; there was a clattering of candlesticks, glassware—I don't know what. The company was in a hilarious mood and pretty noisy. They approached my door; fortunately, it was locked from the inside.

During these few minutes the soldier, now in civilian clothes, had turned pale as a corpse again; he trembled like a leaf and fumbled at his clothes. He was at my bed at once, grasped my hands and pressed them violently. «*Danke, danke, ewig dankbar!*» he stammered, pantingly. I shall never, as long as I live, forget the look he gave me. And the next second he had faced about, grabbed my hat and coat from the chair, and before I realized it had disappeared through a door leading into the dark room.

At almost the same time my hall door was tried. My colleagues, the reporters, wanted to get hold of me. It was too early to end the celebration yet! Zeebrügge was not freed every day, and Monsieur Durand had just got fairly started. I do not remember

Digitized by Google

whether I reasoned with them or not. Anyhow, I did not open my door. I had to gather my wits, set in order my impressions of what actually had happened. Perhaps I had committed a ridiculous act or an unpardonable folly—even something worse. What would the Belgians say? And how would I explain the disappearance of my clothes and the presence of the dirty gray uniform in their stead? Should I tell anyone about my experience? The most sensible thing would be to keep everything to myself. Out of consideration for the German this would also be the safest and fairest to him. But how was I to get along without my clothes? I could not go around all day in pajamas. One solution knocked the other into bits; but, thank goodness, weariness finally overpowered my thoughts; I fell asleep, and slept the sleep of the just. The Lord knows whether I had earned it. My companions finally had grown quiet. They took possession of a couple of rooms at the other end of the hall. And so the calm of the night descended upon Zeebrügge again.

I am reluctant to speak of the next morning. It was unpleasant in more ways than one. I had not come one step closer to a decision about the best course for me to take. I walked up and down the floor in my pajamas and pondered. Besides, I did not feel in very good «form.» Evidently the discovery of the stock of

Digitized by Google

absinthe the night before had not been a good thing for me. I had a difficult problem on my hands. Let me say that I went in the tracks of the German, spying from door to door through the corridors on all the floors, until I finally found the place of refuge that I sought and so sorely needed. I remained there a good while—and frequently returned to it.

On the whole I was in an unnerved and disagreeable condition. My colleagues, in spite of last night's carousing, were on their feet comparatively early. I heard the slamming of doors, talking in the halls, even at my door, while I was absent. Captain Gouin's voice was heard several times. He seemed excited and cross—a real «morning after» temper. He must have looked for me several times. I paid no attention to him; I was not presentable yet, and, besides, we had decided not to leave until nine o'clock.

A little after nine I was somewhat in order. I had decided what to do, and my attire was as inconspicuous as I could make it under the circumstances. I made up my mind to present myself before the leader of our party and lay all my cards on the table. I had hopes that he would help me in the matter of completing my outfit. Fortunately, I had my overcoat with me; it would cover over my mottled interior—my mottled inner exterior, perhaps I ought to put it.

Digitized by Google

I had on pajamas, socks, and slippers—*voilà* a costume for a war correspondent.

I came stepping down the stairs to the hall, determined to rise superior to whatever might happen. The whole band of reporters was assembled, together with four or five civilians; the chauffeurs were there, too, and Captain Gouin, with a few unknown officers, Monsieur Durand, and several others. This was too much for me. Noiselessly I bounded down the steps and hid myself in the corner behind the stairs and the railing. A smashed and discarded chandelier was lying there also in the semi-darkness under the stairway.

A few seconds passed before I realized what was going on. The men were all talking at once, and gesticulating. Apparently they were all stirred by a very interesting theme. Had Brussels been taken already, or had the Germans applied for an armistice? Or might they, after all, be returning to Zeebrügge, and were we perhaps surrounded at this moment? I waited, breathless, for the explanation.

And it came—a fragment of a sentence, which I shall never forget. Though I live to be a hundred years, I shall hear it. It was our chief, Captain Gouin, who spoke the words. He rapped on his saber and in the ensuing silence began to speak. I did not catch the beginning of his statement, but this is what I did

Digitized by Google

hear—the words came clear and distinct, and re-echoed through the hall:

«. . . our colleague from Norway (here he mentioned my name) disappeared last night and was recovered as a corpse this morning on the quay!»

I began to feel my skin prickle here and there and my knees became wabbly; that light from the hall, where did it come from? I sat down on the chandelier —«*Sie haben ein gutes Gesicht, mein Herr.* Here I am, do with me what you will, if only ——»

After a while I took the matter more calmly. It was all clear to me. I knew what had happened. «For God's sake, sir, do not raise the alarm!» I cried.

When I had been properly dressed, Captain Gouin, Monsieur Durand, a Belgian officer, and I went down to the quay. On the way Major Le Duc told me a few details, which were not quite clear to me:

He was the chief of a mixed detachment of artillery and engineering troops which had entered Zeebrügge the day before. They were ordered to clear the docks and repair the railway tracks from Zeebrügge to Bruges. The work was begun at once. At dawn that morning it was reported to the major that a German civilian, presumably a spy, had been shot inside the harbor. When the major came down, he received more definite information. Everything tended to show that the shooting of the spy was justifiable,

Digitized by Google

being under suspicious circumstances. The men working at the docks had noticed a man in civilian clothes sneaking down the line. Civilians, especially civilian men, were not very numerous in Zeebrügge that morning. The soldiers hailed him: «Hey, hello! Come here and give us a lift, you loafer!—*arrête-toi, embusqué!*» they shouted. But the fellow did not stop at all; on the contrary, he speeded up his gait, and a patrol was sent after him. The fellow was caught after a quick chase, and then it appeared that the man was a German. He did not know a single word of Flemish or French. He was a genuine *boche,* dressed in a checkered sport suit. He pretended to be out of his head, crazy, but that trick was too common. He was hooked, bullied, and jeered at properly. They locked him into a warehouse on the pier—he would be turned over to a court-martial later in the day. But in some way or other, suddenly the workmen saw him in flight again! He had been able to sneak out of the warehouse! But then his career stopped short, the miserable rogue! Two or three bullets got him simultaneously, and the spy had paid with his life for his treachery!

Thus far everything was smooth and easy. But now began the queer part. They had *fouillé* the corpse—searched it with a view to identification. In the checkered coat was found a pocketbook full of papers and

Digitized by Google

documents. And then they were confronted with the fact that his papers seemed to declare him a foreigner. There were surprisingly many and valuable documents. Various passes from Norwegian authorities! A letter of recommendation from *la légation de Norvège à Paris*. There were documents of identification issued by the French Foreign Office itself, its «*Maison de la Presse*» in Rue François 1ier! There were private letters to an addressee whose name was far from resembling a German—and on the whole . . . there must be something wrong. Was it absolutely certain that the dead man had talked German and only that language?

I did not have much to say in reply to these questions. It seemed, on the whole, best for me to keep still, let the others try to solve the riddle.

But one thing surprised me—that the report about the shooting had arrived so soon, just where it would be of the greatest interest. Who had brought the report to Mayerhaus Hotel? This was explained by the major. A couple of his officers had heard the rumor that the «neutrals» had arrived. The Hotel Mayerhaus, where they themselves had hoped to put up, was taken by the correspondents; they were a «mission» of neutral but friendly reporters. And so it seemed natural to suppose, judging from the papers, that some connection might exist between the hotel and the

Digitized by Google

dead man. An officer had gone up with the description of the body and had brought along the papers that were found in the coat pocket. The checkered coat was a pretty good mark. A wide-brimmed hat was also a good proof. Besides, they had the papers, which tallied. They referred to a correspondent *du journal «Aftenposten,» de Christiania*, and to a name which is mine only. The officer had met Monsieur Durand personally. Durand had testified to the correctness of the clothes. He also knew that Christiania was located in Norway.

Captain Gouin, who had been notified, could also testify that the proofs were decisive. Unfortunately, everything was completely obvious—the correspondent had disappeared during the night. His costume was as described, his name like the one cited, his supposed room at the hotel was empty. Nobody had seen him since early last evening. There was no doubt as to the identity.

We came down to the quay. They took us into a small wooden shed. It was a waiting-room for the railway brakemen. We entered, and there he lay on a wooden bench by the wall. The shot had been well aimed. A thin streak of blood had formed a clot on the breast. The blood had found its way through the cloth, run down the coat—a wide-checked gray coat of ordinary size.

Digitized by Google

I stood looking at the suit, which was a good fit, and at the boy whom the clothes covered. I stood looking—and looking—looking at my own corpse.

My companions said that our faces, too, bore a resemblance.

Digitized by Google

The Man with the X-ray Eyes

WHO has said that we must absolutely understand everything that happens in the world? We have perhaps, after all, not gotten beyond realizing that there are still things between heaven and earth which we simply *must believe.* Just *believe*—give up trying to reach bottom with our understanding. One may or may not believe the story about MacMurray, the corporal from Cincinnati—the man with the X-ray eyes. I am only telling it as I myself saw it, and as I heard it retold from many sources during the last months of the war. It caused no small sensation along the front at that time. It had a breath of something new and marvelous, even in that witches' caldron of frenzied imaginings brewed by gods and devils, which was the war, and in which nothing was impossible. But then came peace. It was ten years ago last fall, and much has been forgotten, including the story about him.

Do you remember the «rupture» at Saint-Mihiel—«*la hernie de Saint-Mihiel,*» as the French called it?

Digitized by Google

The peculiar, senseless projection on the arch of the west front immediately southeast of Verdun, which the Allies did not succeed in cutting away or «putting back again» until four years after it broke out.

The name of Saint-Mihiel and the neighboring section of the front is probably best remembered from the fact that it was here that the American troops made their first independent contribution in the World War. It was General Pershing's soldiers who received the honorable task of cutting off in a quick operation that protuberance which the Germans had pushed out from their front line in Lorraine by their occupation of Saint-Mihiel, the 24th of September, 1914. Four long, grievous years had passed before the first American army in the middle of September, 1918, came and tried to straighten out the front at this point. It was the American army's first contribution to Foch's general offensive along the whole line. And their baptism of fire resulted in a splendid victory for them. In the course of a couple of days the attack was carried out to perfection. Under the personal command of General Pershing the twenty-to-twenty-five-kilometer-deep «pocket» was blown out and cleared of Germans, Saint-Mihiel freed, 15,000 prisoners gathered up, and the front forcibly rolled back in the direction of the Rhine. The «Star-

Digitized by Google

spangled Banner» had by one stroke gained its place among the victorious banners of the Allies.

In due time the proper American authorities had drawn up a most precise and accurate report of the circumstances under which MacMurray, corporal in the Third company of sappers, in an Ohio regiment, had been wounded during this first main attack at Saint-Mihiel. The authorities thought possibly that these circumstances might help to some extent in throwing light on the extraordinary turn which developed in the life of the corporal from the time he was stricken. It appeared that it didn't work out that way. The doctors and other representatives of science who came to deal with the case denied any relation of cause and effect between the explosion and the form of disease as it characteristically developed in the MacMurray case. But, be that as it may, one thing was at any rate accomplished by the report—it established what happened at the moment when MacMurray received his wounds. And for the time being that will suffice for us.

He and his squad marched as a safety patrol at the left of the company during the advance of the first day of the attack. Against constantly stiffening resistance they had forced their way up to a thicket in front of the village of Hattonchâtel, near Vi-

Digitized by Google

gneulles. There the firing from the German batteries became too strong, and the American «dug in.» They hastily hollowed out a trench at the edge of the woods and remained there for several hours. Impossible to advance. It was in the evening after dark that it happened. A huge German shell struck the ground behind the improvised American trench. It happened here as in the famous French *tranchée des baïonnettes* in front of Verdun—the bomb smashed in the trench; air pressure started a landslide from the rear; men and guns, knapsacks and caps, coats and bayonets, in a fraction of a second were all buried in a mess, packed and puddled together in the sticky mass of earth and clay on both sides of the trench. Most of the squad's men disappeared at once, buried alive, swallowed up forever. Here not even the bayonets stuck out of the ground—as at Verdun. MacMurray and two of his men were the only ones who escaped alive. When they awoke from the shock, they were all three stuck fast in the fallen mass of earth, standing or lying in twisted and painful positions, though with their heads clear of the clayey mud. A fearful awakening. All more or less wounded, shaken, bewildered, deaf, from the explosion; half unconscious from the shock, the pressure, and the concussion; they were scarcely able to manifest themselves to one another; one shouted, questioning; another groaned

Digitized by Google

in reply; the third tried faintly to wave a badly bruised arm in the air. It took hours before connection between them was somewhat established, and before they realized that here they lay—the only three survivors—buried, helpless, a prey to pain and death, if help did not come pretty soon. And it did not come. But night came—long and terrible, unendurable, maddening. To cap it all, the rain poured unceasingly. Is there, then, no limit to what a human being has to endure? Oh, if only God sometimes would send death a little sooner! Or if He would at least let a gun remain lying a little closer, so a fellow could reach it! But, no! Here lies a man covered with earth, so that only the head and the left shoulder are free, the rest of the body forced into a twisted, unnatural, awful posture, with two meters of earth on top of him, legs forced apart and sprawling, the back in an awkward angle with the hips, the right arm broken and out of joint. MacMurray was alive, and this was his situation. During the first hours of the night he called for help; only his two comrades heard his cries. And they too, cried, could do nothing else. None of them could move an inch. All three of them were wedged into the earth, doomed to die.

The night passed and it became morning and noon of the next day. This was Friday, September 13th. Yes, both a Friday and the 13th! MacMurray discov-

Digitized by Google

ered this during one of his more or less conscious moments, and he almost smiled—in the midst of his pain—at the coincidence. «Good luck, Mac!» He had experienced some strange coincidences in his life already. He was wondering whether he could live through the day. The pains seemed to have lessened, both the legs and right arm were for long periods entirely without pain or sensation; it was the head and back that ached most now. Hunger and thirst caused him unspeakable agony. He lay twisting his head, looking for food and drink. One of his comrades had died toward morning, at least he was quite still and no longer raised his voice. Perhaps he only slept. But Kentucky Jim, his other comrade, surely was not asleep. He had made an awful racket. With the strength of an ox he had fought against earth and death; he *had* to get up, out of this embrace, and see! He finally succeeded, during the night, in tearing himself loose to the extent of freeing the upper part of his body. But his legs were still held fast, could not be moved an inch, and in the forenoon the strength was ebbing even in «Black Jim's» huge body, famous wrestler that he was. Now he lay there, vomiting, trying to heave himself, like a dog jerking at his chain. And the rain, merciless, dismal, continued to pour down upon these two forlorn soldiers, who were lying so far to one side of the advancing line that the

Digitized by Google

hospital service and the grave-diggers went past and did not see them.

Thus the hours dragged, one after the other.

Then suddenly MacMurray catches sight of something. What is it?—The knapsack with the canteen and food rations. He had again been off for a while and had just awakened, come back to himself. During the last few hours his mind had been wandering thus to and fro, between reality and hallucination, quite unconscious at times. Now he is normal for a little while; at once he sees what before he has not observed—the knapsack lying not more than two or three yards away and in front of the spot where Black Jim lies. If his partner could stretch himself, not more than his own length, he would reach the knapsack and pull it over to himself. And in the sack are cans of food, three tins of reserve provisions, and a canteen nearly full of wine. Drink, food and drink! Mac's tongue, parched with thirst, clings to his palate and his raging stomach cries for food. The rations lie on top, inside the bag, half a loaf of bread is there, too, and in the side pocket is the flask three-quarters full of wine. Mac calls to his partner. Does he see the knapsack? Can't he manage to reach it? Try, just try, for God's sake! The reserve rations are there, bread and wine. You see it, don't you?

Black Jim remains quiet and for a long time pays

Digitized by Google

no attention to Mac's call. He is raving, poor fellow! He is out of his head from hunger. There is something they call hunger hallucination—when a fellow is almost done for. The knapsack over there is laced up tight; nobody can see what is inside of it.

But MacMurray keeps on calling—again and again; his voice sounds cheerful, almost merry.

«Shut up!» Black Jim finally yells back at him. «Cut out that nonsense and leave me alone!»

«What do you mean?» answers Mac.

«I mean—I mean that how in hell can you possibly look clear through the sack? And you had better stop trying to be funny, considering the situation in which we are, both you and I.»

«Can't I see?» says MacMurray, but stops short. He lapses into complete silence, and just lies there, staring. For ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, he lies quiet and just stares.

«But just the same, I can see,» he suddenly breaks out. He speaks in a tone that is half timid and meek, half angry and defiant, as when sometimes a smaller boy who ventures to differ with a stronger one pretends to know better. «Just the same I *can* see!» he repeats. «And you may believe what you like,» he adds, faintly.

At that moment it was clear to him that the knapsack was intact and laced up tight. It was buttoned

Digitized by Google

and tied according to regulations; there was even a trench shovel fastened over the cover. But there was food in it, three round cans of reserve rations untouched, the half loaf of bread, the canteen, and the salt—he saw it all as clearly as could be.

Thus it came to pass that MacMurray became aware of his X-ray power of vision, of his ability to see right through things.

Half an hour later they were both rescued. Dug out, picked up by «corpse-gatherers» who had come to clear the ground of the dead and missing.

The MacMurray case—the extraordinary thing about it—aroused no small attention at the war hospital near Gondrecourt, to which both the men were taken. MacMurray's legs were both affected with gangrene and the doctors dealt with them in the usual way.

But it was the thing about his eyes that caused the sensation. It soon leaked out that the hospital had gotten a man with a «double vision,» a patient who looked right through everything, living or dead, people, walls, steel safes, and animals—anything that he had a notion to X-ray.

The doctors and nurses had begun by laughing disdainfully at his «sixth sense»; but before three days had passed they stopped laughing. They shook

Digitized by Google

their heads and declined to go into any explanation of the phenomenon; but they no longer denied—they could hardly do so!—that the patient in a surprisingly large number of instances seemed to possess extraordinary powers of vision, powers which the known optical laws did not suffice to explain. In hundreds of cases already MacMurray had surprised and mystified those about him. At the start he, too, seemed to be surprised, somewhat curiously impressed, by his new faculty. The first day he lay in bed and rather made a sport of his visionary powers. They gave him pocketbooks, handbags, closed boxes, and the like, on which to try his ability. Instantly, without touching the objects or even bringing them up close, he told what they contained. Without hesitation or error he gave facts about the coins and bank notes in the purse, the number, denomination, date, and other details. He could see keys, rings, pencils, and letters in closed bags or locked boxes. He told who stood or walked in the corridor back of the closed doors. He described the adjoining sick ward, the floors above and below his own, the room of the sister superior, the operating-room on the first floor. Everything tallied. Everything found within the walls of the hospital was like an open book to him. As yet the range of his vision was limited by the domain of the military establishment. Beyond that it became foggy and indistinct.

Digitized by Google

MacMurray was asked *how* he could see, in what manner the images came and the objects presented themselves to his consciousness. Was it his physical eyes he made use of or did he claim to have an imaginary *inner vision*? He did not know that himself. He only knew that it did not cost him any effort or will power. He wasn't lying there concentrating his will in an effort to see anything whatever. He had seen enough in his life and now had enough to do to allay the pains in his body. If he wanted to *see*, he had only to turn his eyes toward the object concerned, or merely direct them to where he knew or supposed the thing to be. «Perhaps I name the thing to myself once or twice or somehow direct my thought to it, but without concentration or effort. I *touch* it with my thought, that's all. I get it by adjustment, just like working the finder in a kodak, and the view appears, as a rule, instantly. Sometimes it comes of itself, without my thinking of it at all. Usually the images are sharp and clear cut, natural and not at all like reflections. The distances are correct, right is right and left is left. The image is a positive, but tinted, and the colors wonderfully beautiful. But they do not remain long on the negative. A mill-wheel flings them up, I don't know from where. Sparks fly about them, and the wheel is in constant motion. *Intuition* I guess

Digitized by Google

some people call the process; I should rather call it *emulsion*.»

This is approximately how he explained it. But he did *see*, as already stated, and at first he saw continually. It amazed him and mystified, excited, and stunned others. The more views he had the more he was regarded as a phenomenon. There was a mob around his bed; healed and wounded crowded together in order to see and hear. Physicians and officers came from other hospitals to take a peep at the fellow. The reports about him began to travel along the front. «The crystal-gazer from Gondrecourt» is what they called him in the lines. The name was utterly wrong, for he did not gaze into crystal globes. But a phenomenon must have a name to go by.

Not many days passed before the sensation about his marvelous powers began to tire MacMurray. The incessant and steadily growing curiosity of both personnel and patients got on his nerves and annoyed him considerably. True, it cost him but little effort to see; he only needed, as he expressed it with a crooked smile, to wiggle his head a little to bring his second sight into activity. Otherwise he looked at a door, a wall, or a man just like any normal person did. But the constant and sudden shifting of the two visions, his normal and his mind's eye's view, the abrupt and quickly succeeding transition from

Digitized by Google

daylight vision to the visualizing behind, tired and unnerved him considerably at times. And now, in addition, the hospital surgeons began to experiment with him for their own purposes. They used him as an X-ray apparatus on the other patients. A fracture might be in question. MacMurray looked at it and sketched the fractured areas on a slate. Afterward the bone was photographed as usual, and the picture agreed to a dot with MacMurray's drawing. A man is brought in with a bullet wound in his stomach. MacMurray says, «A bullet is lodged in the large intestine.»

«What is the matter with the man who is now being laid on the operating-table?» some one asks.

«He is bleeding from the lower part of his right lung,» says MacMurray. «The pleura is already full of blood up to the sixth rib.»

Time and again they tried him thus. And the doctors X-rayed and ascertained that he was correct.

Scientifically interested groups began arriving to view the MacMurray case. Professors from Paris and Nancy came to see him. Charles Richet and Chovrin had notes transcribed for themselves. Doctor Ménard, chief of the radio department of the great Cochin hospital in Paris, made him a visit of several days and was very much interested. Ménard was himself in a way a victim of the mysterious power of the X-rays,

Digitized by Google

for his hands were being consumed by the dangerous rays; he had already lost a couple of fingers on each hand. Doctor Ménard was convinced that MacMurray's case had to be regarded as a physical phenomenon exclusively. The rays which issued from MacMurray's eyes and penetrated solid matter were of a kind hitherto unknown. In other words, it was a sort of human Röntgen ray that they had to deal with. Had not the Italian engineer, Signor Ulivi, a short time ago, discovered some wonderful rays—F-rays, he called them—which in many ways resembled those which flashed out of Corporal MacMurray's eyes? Engineer Ulivi had performed a series of experiments with his rays outside the French naval port, Brest; from a distance of more than ten kilometers he had projected the rays against floating mines and blown them up. Experiments carried out during the last few weeks in the presence of England's cleverest experts in the navy yards of Portsmouth had given as one of their results that the dismantled British cruiser *Terpsichore*, of 3,400 tons, loaded with mines, was made to explode by the simple fact that Engineer Ulivi from a distance of more than twenty kilometers had directed his invisible «death rays» against the cruiser. Science stood within reach of unthought-of possibilities in the domains of radiology and radiotherapy. In his «periodic system» Mendelieff proves

Digitized by Google

that the chemical nature of the elements is a function of their atomic weights. But the holes in his series are a clear indication that there are elements not yet discovered. And Henri Becquerel has established with regard to the metal uranium that out of it, and with no addition of energy from outside, proceed rays with exceedingly strong powers of penetration of both organic and inorganic matter, and which would blacken the photographic plate even after having passed through thick metal walls. Can anyone say with certainty whether the human body may not be like a charged mass of uranium, a «ray-projector» in greater or less degree, and whether MacMurray may not be an anticipated case in a development which in time will bring about the release of latent radio-power in every individual?

The tide of discussion rose high, both in the camp of the materialists and among the not inconsiderable group of scholars and laymen who sought an explanation of MacMurray's powers on a more spiritual, psychological-metaphysical basis. Spiritualists, theosophists, and occultists, of course cited MacMurray in support of their theories. There is a world of space and time which manifests itself only by way of the «supersensitive.» All matter is «foraminous»; the core of things is motion; he «sees,» who vibrates in harmony with what is seen. Mac-

Digitized by Google

Murray's nerves have made a good start. But «cryptoscopy,» the ability to «see» objects near by, but hidden from the ordinary senses, is surely one side of the «developed» brain's possibilities of perception, while «television» has no space limits, and clairvoyance in time past and future can only be attained supersensually. The truly clairvoyant can read anything whatever at any time within the cosmic memory.

That's how they discussed and theorized and philosophized around MacMurray's bed, in the hospital at Gondrecourt, and thence in ever widening circles. Even among men at the front the unaccountable is alluring. And nothing spreads faster and wider than the bacilli from a slightly infected mystery case. Most people are predisposed to a «sixth sense» fever. *Mundus vult decipi* (People want to be fooled—they are fooled).

In the meantime MacMurray became physically worse from day to day. The gangrene spread; the fifth day after his «disinterment» his left leg was cut off. The right was infected up to the hip, and it was only a question of time when it too would have to be amputated.

At this time he talked much about Cincinnati and his parents there, and about a little house in which they lived near the canal—the Miami Canal as he

Digitized by Google

called it, and he dwelt caressingly on the name. And he constantly talked about «Little Germany,» a beautiful park, Burnt Park, and about the many kind Germans with whom he had associated daily, both there and at the factory where, before the war, he had been employed as electrician. He was either delirious —while apparently conscious—or he was pro-German to a surprising degree. The latter notion also gave occasion for many reflections and comments round about in the beds of the ward where he lay. So he was pro-German. Well, he had certainly been nicely treated by his friends! If he lost his right arm, too—which seemed very probable—his friends would have «reduced» him to a trunk without limbs, a square-shaped monstrosity, with one arm for a handle, the wreck of a man, horrible to look upon and pitiful to think about. And if he lived at all, he would ever have to be carted or carried about like a child. Indeed, his friends, the Germans, must prove a source of joy to him!

But MacMurray talked just as gently and quietly about the Germans as he did about his friend from the trenches, Black Jim from Corington, whose bed was the fifth farther down in the ward. It looked as if Jim would pull through; his strength was returning and the wounds healing. But one day MacMurray drew the chief surgeon's face down to his and whis-

Digitized by Google

pered—he had been looking steadily at Jim: «Tomorrow Jim will be through. The cloud covers him from head to foot.»

The next day Black Jim died. Embolism, the doctors said.

There gradually grew up in Mac a fear, a perfect terror, of something that was about to happen to him. His eyes became staring, glassy; he lay as if watching for something unavoidable, something that was drifting in toward him from afar. It was not the new amputations, for those he expected, and they both occurred in due course of time. These he met calmly and with the greatest patience. He said, too, that it was not death he dreaded. «Death I have not feared for nineteen months,» said he. On the contrary, he was well prepared to enter the dark gates. God have mercy on our souls, every one of us! But there was something else he lay there in fear of. «Something will happen,» said he, «but I do not yet see what it is. Oh, it will come soon,» added he. «I can see farther every day. Now the way around the hospital no longer limits my vision; I can see on the other side of it, clear beyond the front.»

One thing harassed him long and often—a problem which he struggled with and had difficulty in mastering. The nurses heard it and told about it later. Re-

Digitized by Google

peatedly he came back to the words of the Scriptures about pardon and the forgiveness of sins. He said: «We pray to our Father in heaven to forgive us our sins as we forgive our debtors. Again and gain we need God's forbearance and forgiveness. And so we, too, on our side, must forgive those who may have wronged us. All right! But why does the Lord say in another place that I must forgive my brother who sins against me, not seven times, but seven times seventy? That means forgiveness four hundred ninety times. But five hundred times I need not forgive him. Isn't that so? Where is the significance in that? Is the duty of forgiveness on earth limited, or isn't it? Is there anything that cannot be forgiven? Shall a man allow himself to be trampled upon, kicked and spat upon, year after year without paying back? Where is, then, the limit of self-respect, or is that another sinful notion? Self-assertion, is that only a trick of the devil? ‹Judge not that ye be not judged.› Oh, I lie here so naked,» said MacMurray. «I have a head and perhaps a certain amount of brains in it. But I have no longer anything with which to *face* men. I feel so cold about my shoulders.»

It was on Monday, October 14, 1918, that I stood for a moment at MacMurray's bedside. For a fort-

Digitized by Google

night a bunch of journalists had been touring the front, the French in Champagne, the Americans in Lorraine. It was right in the midst of the general offensive, just as the victory was being clinched. One day we reached the military hospital at Gondrecourt —the largest and best equipped in that section of the front. It was an imposing establishment, and I have jotted down many and large figures from this model of a war hospital. But it is those few minutes at the bedside of MacMurray which will linger longest in my memory. We had been posted on the case and were allowed to look at him for a moment.

As we reached the bed at the farthest end by the window, MacMurray was lying with a sheet of paper and a pencil on the blanket in front of him. He was drawing or writing something on the paper. He paid little attention to us, and I thought there was on his face a slight expression of contempt. There was nothing extraordinary about his eyes or his looks otherwise; he was a handsome, dark-haired young man with regular, clear-cut features, and yellowish-gray complexion, caused by the long stay at the hospital; and the body under the sheet appeared in outline about the length and width of a fairly good-sized bridge table.

He gave only brief answers to the questions that my

Digitized by Google

colleagues put to him. He looked up at us rather indifferently. The whole thing seemed flat and meaningless. We were about to leave, but then the Dutchman in our company asked: «When do you think the war will be finished?» MacMurray's features relaxed into a faint smile, and before the sentence was completed he took the sheet of paper from the blanket and quickly handed it to the Dutchman. The latter looked at it, was startled, looked at MacMurray, again at the paper, then handed it to us, his colleagues. «When do you think the war will be finished?» was written with pencil and in a legible hand. That's how MacMurray could write with the hand he had left. He knew beforehand what we were going to ask him! We all stood there quite impressed, but looking rather foolish; nothing more was said, neither questions nor answers. Then we bowed ceremoniously and went our way down the aisle. I turned to look at him once more. Then he waved to me with a quick, imperious gesture. I walked back to his bedside. «Tell him to ask me exactly four weeks from this very moment,» he said. And then he added, «Why does that man carry a dagger over his heart, and beneath the dagger the New York *Times* for Friday, September 20th?» I just shook my head and started to follow my comrades. I had no answer to his questions. A soldier

Digitized by Google

on the bed next to MacMurray's looked angrily at me and said, suddenly: «You asked when this damn war will end. I'll tell you: Hell, heaven, or Hoboken by Christmas.» What a regular fake of a prophet!

When we reached the vestibule below I took the Dutchman aside and told him the brief additional episode by MacMurray's bed. I looked at my watch. It was exactly five minutes past eleven in the forenoon. My colleague did not answer, but turned back the left lapel of his coat and pulled something from the inside pocket—a beautifully chiseled dagger, which was carefully wrapped in a checkered handkerchief. «I found this the other day in an old German trench,» said he. Then he unbuttoned his vest. Between shirt and undershirt he showed a folded newspaper covering his chest.

«I put it there this morning when we started in the automobile,» he added. «It was so cold that I was afraid I might catch cold.» We looked at the paper, unfolded it, and read, «New York Times, September 20, 1918.»

The rest of this story is not mine, directly, but Miss Evelyn Pulford's. She was an American nurse, at the end of the war on duty at the military hospital at Gondrecourt. I had met her before, in the early part of the war, at the large American hospital at Neuilly,

Digitized by Google

just outside of Paris, where she at one time took care of my countrywoman, the Norwegian nurse, Miss Ingeborg Steen Hansen, who was near death's door with typhus, caught on the Serbian front. It was Sister Evelyn who told me the two or three final episodes of the MacMurray case. She was there and saw what happened.

No one understood how it really came about; but one day—it was toward the end of October—a Red Cross sister, a stranger, suddenly came running up the aisle in Ward C of the Gondrecourt hospital. This was MacMurray's ward. The unknown sister looked excited and troubled about something. She had just come in from the rain; her cloak fluttered about her; her hair was disheveled and her face dripping wet. She came alone, rushing up the aisle. She glanced hurriedly to either side, searchingly, anxiously turning her wide-open brown eyes toward each face as she passed. A couple of times she stopped for an instant, questioning and hesitating, but hurried on.

It was not until she reached the end of the row, the very last bed, over by the window—there she fell in a heap over him, collapsed right on the bed. A whimpering sound, as from a dying animal—a block of stone, as it were, rocking a little after an earthquake —and a fluttering blue cloak covered them both.

The sister superior had to be sent for to get her

Digitized by Google

removed. They had to use force to get her away from the bed.

Three wise apes,
with eyes that are closed to evil,
with ears that hear only what is just,
lips that utter no slander,
they sit in silent strength.
KARMA: Every cause created through thoughts,
desires, and acts, produces certain effects,
which in their turns again become causes.

Who can tell how the Sister in Blue—that's what they called her, for nobody knew her name—who can tell how she, a stranger and unknown, forced the chief surgeons' and the other authorities' permission to remain at the hospital of Gondrecourt, where she did not belong? The last hospital to which she had been assigned was at the front, but she had served at several. She had moved, escaped, from one hospital to another all along the front, the American sector, during the seven to eight months since her arrival from America. But now she would stay, she would move no more. And in Ward C she did her share of the work, and much more, both day and night, but especially at night. She did not spare herself. And she was more than competent. The patients forgot or pretended to forget her wild, sensational arrival among

Digitized by Google

them. When they rang they would a little rather that she be the one to come and help them.

But MacMurray did not smile when she approached his bed. He didn't smile at all any more, and his pallor increased from time to time. When she spoke to him, he answered in a low and whispering voice. He had little to say about anything. But in the dark she sat and held his hand—the right hand, in which there still was life. But he never asked her to do so.

No one knows what MacMurray saw those last few days. Not even the Sister in Blue. He had not yet experienced the last of evil to come. Is there no limit to what a human being must suffer? Oh, if only the Lord would now and then send death along a little sooner than he does! Thoughts may torture one worse than the most excruciating physical pain. And he suffers most who suffers on account of the pain of another. To that point had he come. «God's mill grinds slowly, but it grinds fine and never stops.»

One night—it was the night before the 8th of November—MacMurray suddenly became wild and noisy. He shouted, gesticulated with his one arm. «Now he comes! Now they come!» he yelled, incessantly, and tried to raise his mutilated body in the bed. He had to be put down by force. Then his eyes gleamed—for the first time—as if in madness. They flashed with a phosphorescent gleam. He had a vision

Digitized by Google

and was communicating it to everybody. The entire ward listened breathlessly. «There are two automobiles coming across the front, and the searchlight is playing on them. They are on the way from Maubeuge to La Capelle. A huge white flag waves over each of them; there are Germans in the automobiles! Two prominent civilians and a general in the foremost car, two captains and a naval officer in the second. They are coming to ask for an armistice and for peace. I can see a railway coach where Foch and his staff wait. They are waiting for the Germans; they sit and write. Number 2419 D is painted on the coach where Foch is . . . !»

One week later, when the world received the details of the Armistice conference at Rethondes, MacMurray's flashlight vision was verified. They agreed to a dot on every point. The two eminent civilians were Erzberger and Count Oberndorf.

The next afternoon a wounded American, a mutilated sergeant, was carried into Ward C from the operating-room on the first floor. He had been struck by shrapnel the previous night, at midnight, in one of the trenches nearest to Gondrecourt. He was frightfully injured; the pelvis was crushed and vital organs torn. There was not much left of the poor fellow. They put him in the same bed in which Black Jim had died, the fifth from MacMurray's. Mac looked at the

Digitized by Google

man when he was brought in. Not a muscle quivered in his face; he had lain there long, waiting for him. The man was his old friend, Floyd Hill from Cincinnati; but he had not seen him for nineteen months. Strange how friends may part and meet again.

At dusk the Sister in Blue came up the aisle, carrying a supper tray on her arm. She had not seen Jim's bed otherwise than empty the last couple of weeks. She came along glad and smiling, past the beds. Suddenly she saw him. She stopped short, stared, turned pale as a sheet! A scream—as if from a person in utmost distress. Then she collapsed, falling in a heap on the floor.

That night MacMurray died.

In the evening, after the shades were pulled down, he asked that his bed might be pushed down the aisle. Most of the patients were already asleep. In front of Floyd's bed he asked the guard to stop. With an effort he raised himself from the couch, touched Floyd's blanket, as though smoothing it with his hand. Then he fell back on the pillows and made no further effort.

He lay there white and still, just stared. His eyes did not dim, did not close. He lay as if he were looking into something.

No one knew when he died.

Digitized by Google

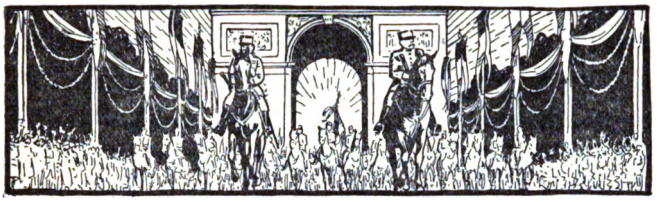
Digitized by Google

PART III

THROUGH THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Through the Triumphal Arch

It is all finished!

The war is over. The beacon of joy is lighted on the Eiffel Tower and the spotlights sweep over the city. Tonight Paris is itself again, the city of light and joy—for the first time in five years. Paris seems ablaze. A year ago who would have believed that it was not the bombs of the «Gothas,» throwing the red glare over the city. Today all that seems like a bad dream, distant and unreal. The «Gothas» ——? This morning we saw Foch and Joffre riding side by side through the Triumphal Arch, and behind them 25,000 soldiers of the victorious armies, on foot and mounted. In glittering sunshine, but under a rain of flowers. Four million people crazy with enthusiasm received them. Airplanes bedecked with flags swarmed in the air. The war ended today. «He who has seen this has lived»—says Clemenceau in his greeting to the French troops.

Many times during these five long years I have

Digitized by Google

asked: Can joy ever come back to France? Are not the wounds too deep, the burns too painful? Have not sorrow and pain drained the fountains of joy and stiffened the faces into masks where smiles and laughter can no longer find expression? Will not the dead cut the strings, if the day should really come when France's living could once more tune their violins?

I stood at the Arc de Triomphe today and saw General Castelnau as he came riding. He was one out of many, and the war had dealt no harder with him than with several in his escort. But I had met him before, in February, 1915, in a frontier town in Alsace. For that reason I noticed him particularly today. Castelnau had lost all his three sons in the war. I wanted to see his face. About his lips was the semblance of a smile; tenderness and gratitude, but no tears, were in his eyes as he quietly saluted to the right and left toward the sea of humanity which burst into jubilant cries as he passed. He rode on as into a transfiguration, when the Triumphal Arch opened its vault for him. He had his sons about him.

And all the women in black whom I saw along the sidewalks last night on the Avenue de la Grande Armée when we sat waiting for the morning and the coming of the victory parade! I had expected that they would perhaps remain at home—the widows,

Digitized by Google

the childless, the young women whose brothers or betrothed will not return, because they were left somewhere out there on the battlefields. I had thought that they would draw the curtains and close their ears to the salutes and shouts of welcome. But no! Here they sat. By the thousands they came to meet one another along the edge of the triumphal procession, and though their eyes wept and their lips were silent, they arose and waved a welcome when the *poilus* filed past. And the courage with which the living made their dead a part of the apotheosis of victory was perhaps the most striking and impressive thing about this wonderful day. Today Victor Hugo's beautiful patriotic hymn was felt on every side:

Gloire à notre France éternelle!
Gloire à ceux qui sont morts pour elle!

It was the unshakable conviction of every French man and woman that right was on the side of France in the war, and that the fearful sacrifices, the fourteen hundred thousand young lives, had not been given in vain, but for the welfare and happiness of humanity. This feeling made the sorrow more bearable, made the parade a festival of thanksgiving, in which even those in mourning might take part. The tribute to victory in death was again and again emphasized in a manner so beautiful and dignified that

Digitized by Google

it probably never has been equaled in the history of France or any other country. A gigantic golden monument to the memory of «*Les Français morts pour la patrie*» was erected under the vault of the Arch of Triumph, and a quarter of a million people filed past it in the course of the night. Every passer-by was allowed to place only *one* flower on the imaginary grave; but by dawn a mountain of flowers lay about the foot of the monument. When President Poincaré drove up to the stand, from which he was to review the parade, the first thing he did was to lay a beautiful wreath of orchids on the pedestal of the monument. After the President, Prime Minister Clemenceau and the presidents of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate followed him, to honor the dead. And no less impressive were the other bearers of flowers who decorated the cenotaph: a private soldier, a bluejacket, one little girl from Alsace, and one from Lorraine. With profound emotion the huge assembly witnessed this official salutation of the dead. The three marshals stood at attention before the monument while the ceremony lasted.

Our theme is the dead and the gratitude France owes them. The other day a proposition was made and was at once acclaimed on all sides, but there was not time to carry it out before the parade took place. In the near future, therefore, the members of the govern-

Digitized by Google

ment, the marshals, the highest military and civil authorities, the chief functionaries of the state and the city of Paris, will go in a body to the plains around Meaux. There, forty kilometers from Paris, are hundreds of soldiers' graves—the heroes of the battle of Ourcq, who saved Paris in September, 1914. A multitude of graves are unnamed. No one knows who the *poilus* are who fell there. The battle raged and they were buried without identification; it was their act, their sacrifice—not their names—which saved Paris and France. And so one of these anonymous graves will be chosen at random, and the remains of this unknown *poilu* will be transferred in solemn procession to Paris and laid to rest in the Panthéon or under the Triumphal Arch. Among France's greatest names, under Napoleon's glorious monument of victory will be a fitting resting-place for the nameless *poilu* of the World War. No one has done more for France than he.

And our theme is still the *poilus* and the nameless ones. One feature more than any other made its impression on me that memorable day of the victory parade. Coming up the Avenue de la Grande Armée, at the head of victorious armies marching up toward the Place de l'Etoile, there marched three men. Foch, Joffre, Pétain? No, leading the armies of victory, ahead of Foch and Joffre, walked three common pri-

Digitized by Google

vate soldiers! Three *poilus*—grayish-blue, ordinary —no one knew who they were. It was the *poilu*, the unknown, nameless—it was the common soldier of France—who first of all lifted the veil and went through the Triumphal Arch into immortality. It was said that this was by order of Joffre. Or was it Foch? Or perhaps they had both wished it. It was a condition of their participation in the review that the *poilu* should go first. «The first in combat, the first to be honored!» A pointer was used to indicate some man's roll number. Three times the needle swung forth and back. And then three privates came from somewhere in the country and opened the victory parade. Behind them came the marshals of France.

A great state banquet was given last night in the Elysée Palace. The President of France celebrated the victory, and a couple of hundred of the greatest men, warriors and diplomats of the Allies, were invited. All the commanders-in-chief of the Allied armies were present—statesmen representing the great powers, and the leaders of the peace conference. Rarely in history has such a group met at one table. But in the place of honor, between President Poincaré and Marshal Foch, sat a French private soldier—a *poilu*. It is true, he had the cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast; he, alone, had captured 153 Germans, including two officers, in a cave near Tar-

Digitized by Google

tras, on the Aisne. But it was surely not only this exploit which won for him the place of honor at the table where every guest probably bore higher decorations. No. It was because he was a soldier, the representative of the millions who, fighting in the front ranks, won the war. He, too, knew that. A flock of reporters rushed upon him as he left the Elysée Palace, bombarded him with questions, wanted to know, among other things, his name. «I have no name,» said he. «*Je suis le poilu.*»

There were other war heroes occupying a place of honor today: the wounded, the maimed. To be sure only an insignificant fraction of them were present,—all the Champs Elysées and the Avenue de la Grande Armée would not have had room for them had they come in full numbers. France has something like two millions severely wounded. But Foch and the government did not forget what the country owed to those who helped build the fabric of victory with the loss of their limbs. One enormous grandstand was built, extending on both sides of the Arc de Triomphe. And there were ranged the wounded and crippled, several thousands of them, armless, legless, blind, gathered together from the military hospitals in Paris and points near by. None had better places than these living victims of the war and none had better earned them.

Digitized by Google

Immediately after the authorities had placed their flowers on the monument to the dead, a strange procession filed in from the Avenue Kléber, passed before the Triumphal Arch, the stand of President Poincaré and the other authorities, and continued down the Champs Elysées, only a few hundred yards in front of the ranks of Foch's and Joffre's soldiers. They were a thousand officers and soldiers, all severely wounded and maimed in the war. It was a sight that brought tears to the eyes of many spectators. Not least impressive was the fact that many of these heroes were demobilized and now paraded in their civilian clothes; workmen's blouses and the worn suits of minor officials went side by side with frock-coats and bright uniforms—all classes, all strata of society who contributed to the country's safety. A giant figure in a sergeant's uniform, with a wooden leg, drew people's attention: It was M. Maginot, multimillionaire, former Cabinet member, who had reported as a volunteer at the beginning of the war. A civilian with only one leg, limps along with a flag under his arm instead of a crutch. An officer lifted the steel helmet from a soldier's head as they both passed in front of the President. The soldier had lost both arms. Three ambulance litters were pushed by Red Cross sisters in the middle of the procession; there lay three soldiers without legs and without arms. A mass of

Digitized by Google

flowers hurled from the grandstands at once covered the blankets of the three human relics. One saw only three pale faces which tried to smile, and big, wide-open eyes, which seemed to burn.

The moment that this homage to the dead and wounded was over, a rocket was fired from the top of the Triumphal Arch—a sign that now came the turn of the living, the uninjured heroes. The parade began. Foch and Joffre, left the Place de l'Etoile by automobile and returned to Porte Maillot, where the guards of honor were waiting. One more solemn act awaited them down there. They were to be received at the city gates by the authorities of Paris, receive the greetings and thanks of the capital city, and receive the keys of the city for themselves and their escort. The prefect of the Seine, M. Autrand, and the president of the City Council, M. Evain, in a few eloquent and well-chosen words bade the victorious warriors welcome to France's capital: «Gentlemen,» said the president of the Council, in closing, as he waved his hand in the direction of the Arch, «Paris is open to you.»

Then Foch and Joffre mounted their horses, and the detachments began their march up the Avenue de la Grande Armée. The weather, rainy and uncertain the last few days, had cleared during the night, and now the sun shone in a cloudless sky. The trees along

Digitized by Google

the boulevard were in their finest bloom, the houses were almost lost under their decoration of flags, airplanes plowed through the air, the bands played, the cannon roared, shouts of applause rose like a storm from the lines of people on both sides; there was a waving of hats and handkerchiefs; there were cheers for Foch, for Joffre, for France, for the Allies. And flowers rained down upon the triumphal procession.

The two marshals approached the Triumphal Arch, Foch at the right on his coal-black steed, Emir; Joffre at the left on his old, reddish-brown, white-faced Ben, the horse from the Marne. Joffre, plump and vigorous, in the old pre-war uniform of a general, black coat and red trousers; and the victor of the Marne looked happy and touched. The wonderful «grandfather's smile» lighted up his face, but now and then his hand brushed across his eyes. Foch, on the other hand wore the new blue field uniform, with the three gold oak leaves around his cap. Straight, immovable, as if molded in bronze, he sat, with his eyes and thin, clear-cut face turned directly ahead. He seemed like an equestrian statue of which only the horse's legs were alive. The marshal's staff with the golden star on the blue velvet ground was pressed tight against his right side. He raised it only once in salutation—at the moment of passing the presidential stand.

Digitized by Google

Then these two, Foch and Joffre, side by side, rode slowly through the Arc de Triomphe.

A Tricolor was swung back and forth over their heads on top of the arch. Two white lights went up in the air. A hundred buglers sounded the march of entry.

And then followed, the soldiers of fifteen countries in ranks of twelve abreast. Bands played between each detachment; the general in command, with his staff, rode at the head of each country's detachment. The Americans, with Pershing in the lead, opened the parade, and it was perhaps the most finished performance of the day. In excellent time, perfect alignment, —one would think that the Americans had decades of training behind them. Then the Belgians, heavy, robust chaps, beneath banners with the illustrious names, Yser, Dixmude, and Liège—cheers welled forth to meet them. Next the English, with Sir Douglas Haig leading, and a countless number of shining, bright-colored, often riddled and torn flags. Who were cheered the most? When was the storm of cheers most deafening? It is difficult to say. But certain it is that a greater outburst of ovations, of wild enthusiasm, can hardly be attained than was exhibited at the moment when the English, and especially the blue-jackets, filed past. Even the common herd has a safe, intuitive judgment, and the English fleet had done its

Digitized by Google

part well during the war. The British marched slowly, solemnly, in the manner of a procession. They do not hurry, but always attain their goal. And they passed through the arch with a firm and easy gait. Then came the Italians, who received a welcome so spontaneous and cordial that it seemed as if the French wanted not only to give thanks for loyal help during the years past, but also to dispel and blot out every sign of discord which lately had marred the good feeling between the two Latin peoples of kindred race. «*Vive l'Italie!*» Next the picturesque and brilliant pageant of Japanese troops, of detachments from Poland, Siam, China, Portugal, Greece (unusually tall, well-built fellows), from Rumania, Serbia, and Czecho-Slovakia. And each country received its salutation, hearty, overwhelming, impressive.

The ground began to tremble from far down the Avenue de la Grande Armée. And a shout went up from a hundred thousand throats, a cry like a flood of sound: «*Les voilà! Nos poilus!*» («Our boys!») And there they came. The French soldiers. In sky-blue uniforms and with their steel helmets gleaming in the sun. The heroes from the Marne, from Reims and Verdun, from the Somme and Champagne. At the head of them rode Marshal Pétain. On a shining white horse, the largest in the whole parade. And now the

Digitized by Google

enthusiasm reached its climax. Everybody was in a delirium. «*Vivent les poilus! Vive la France! Vive Pétain!*» The flowers rained in heaps upon them. People stood with arms outstretched, pushed themselves forward through the ranks of the soldiers, laughed and wept alternately, waved their arms, shouted. Pétain saluted, smiled, saluted again. He was very pale.

And France's army continued to file past, one corps after the other, twenty-one in all, general after general, ranks of soldiers with ever-increasing marks of distinction, war crosses, military medals, the Legion of Honor now and then, yellow, green, and red *fourragères* on their shoulders. And the flags! riddled, torn, many of them; a few were only a ragged strip of cloth fastened to the staff, but the cross of the Legion of Honor waved from the point of the staff. There were the crack regiments, whose losses were terrible, but which performed deeds that will live in the history of war for thousands of years to come. The immortal battalions from Douaumont and Vaux and the «grande Couronne» at Nancy. And the chiefs were there,—who led their men, when the storm of fire was at its worst, when the sky disappeared and hell seemed to be let loose on earth. Mangin with the iron jaw—leading his invincible negro battalions; Gouraud, the one-armed, the lion of the Dardanelles

Digitized by Google

and Butte Tahure; Castelnau, who saved Lorraine and whose three sons were killed; the «fourth Marshal of France», as popular opinion named him long ago; Admiral Ronarch, with his «pompon» sailors from Dixmude; Generals Humbert, Degoutte, Fayolle, Pau, and many others, whose names are forever inscribed with gold letters in the history of France and the world. And not to forget the colonial troops, the splendid warriors from Morocco and Algiers, from Senegal and the Congo, coal-black negros, white-clad Arabs. The cavalry, the artillery—the incomparable «*cinquante-quinze*»—the engineering troops, the flyers, with young Captain Fonck (seventy-two victories) at their head, the telegraphers, the auto-machine guns, and finally the «tanks»—nine of the apocalyptic beasts, the giant lizards of the World War, the cleverest and most terrible product of the destructive genius of humanity. Today a flag waved from the armored deck of the giant lizard.

The marching past lasted exactly three hours. It was estimated that four million people were gathered on the four-kilometer stretch from the Porte Maillot to the Place de la République. Foch, Joffre, and Pétain reviewed the troops as they arrived in front of the monument at the Place de la République. The parade went down the Champs Elysées, across the Place de la Concorde, up the Rue Royale, then down

Digitized by Google

the grand boulevards, past the Madeleine Church and the Opéra. The enthusiasm was equally great everywhere. Places at the windows were sold for as much as 6,000 francs. The state to receive 80 per cent—as luxury tax—of the amounts collected by the owners for the rent of window places. This 80 per cent will be given uncurtailed to charities,—to poor, war-afflicted families. Several millions of francs were collected in the course of three and one half hours. It was half past eight when the first troops started from Porte Maillot; at exactly twelve the «tanks» lowered their flags before the marshals at the Place de la République.

«What is your impression?» the reporters asked Foch when, after the parade, they hurled themselves in a body upon him at the monument.

«You may say that I am satisfied,» replied Foch. «Satisfied and very happy,» he added. «*Très, très heureux.*»

And now it is finished!

Now the war is over. For France, at any rate, it ended only today. I am standing here by my window, looking down on the boulevard, this boulevard on which I have looked so often during these long years, when the city lay in profound darkness and all life

Digitized by Google

seemed extinguished, for fear of the «Gothas,» Zeppelins, and all the hellish abomination of war.

Tonight they dance on the boulevards. On every street corner there is the sound of violins, clarinets, and hand organs. They dance, they dance. Down by the Seine rockets and Bengal fires go up continually. The beacon is lighted on the Eiffel Tower, spotlights are flashed around the city. Tonight Paris is itself again, the city of light and joy—for the first time in five years. It looks like a sea of flame.

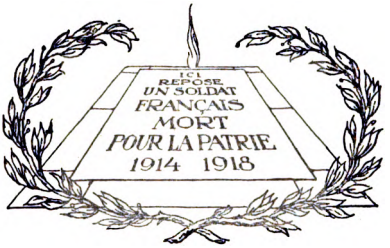
Memories from the front and from the battlefields loom up before me. The endless fields, where the victory was forged—the victory which we celebrate today; and there lie the graves, too, in the darkness, as they have lain every night since the earth was hastily shoveled down over still warm bodies. But millions of thoughts, gentle, tender, go out to them. France will not forget her fallen heroes. Nor should we.

The war is over. We are entering upon a different era.

May the day that will dawn tomorrow be brighter and happier!

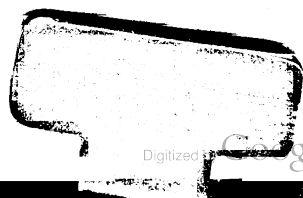
THE END

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google


Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

D
640
.F73

Froisland, F.
The man with the
X-ray eyes...

DATE DUE

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Digitized by Google

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
A000054515819
Digitized by Google